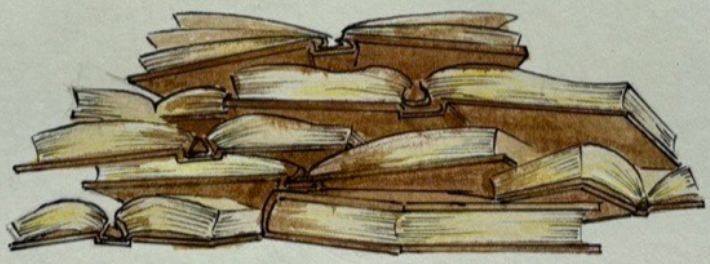
Magister-Auctor Saga



A dangerous thought

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Magister-Auctor Saga

A dangerous thought

Babitha Chakma

Debuty Huáng

To Manuel,
Sebastião and Olívia

To Frankfurt

The barge is stationary once again. It's warm on this late spring evening, and the passengers prefer to stay on board, to feel the apparent coolness of the water's surface. On the dusty towpath, the horsemen are negotiating with the owner of the switching post. The driver had just announced to the passengers that they might be delayed by one more night. John has laid his head on Henriette's lap and fallen asleep. His brother, two years older, looks around, gets up, and walks to the other side of the barge. He was trying to attract his father's attention. He is sitting on the open deck in the light of the setting sun, in a copy of *Acta Eruditorum* to read.

"When are we going to continue, Father?" the boy asks for the umpteenth time. Pieter looks up, puts the magazine away in his bag, picks up the pince-nez, and looks at his son. "The driver doesn't know exactly, so he can't tell us. We have to wait until the horses are rested," he answers.

Father and son get up and go to the cabin to join John and Henriette. Pieter hears a traveling companion remark that the delay might be the work of those accursed heretics, who are conspiring in the city of Frankfurt. "They're doing everything they can to hinder trade with the Catholics. We should burn them all at the stake."

Pieter sighs. Five years ago, Louis XIV, with his edict, scaled back religious freedom in the French Empire to the period before the Edict of Nantes, some eighty years earlier. Fear drove Huguenots and other Reformed Christian families to the Northern

countries. A few years before Louis's war-inciting edict, his cousin, the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, amended Frankfurt's city constitution. The city, the final destination of their journey, has its own citizens' committee. At the moment, the city still flourishes because it welcomed all the skilled craftsmen, merchants, and intellectuals fleeing with open arms. But such things can change. The predominantly Roman Catholic population in the Rhine Valley is angry or worried and hopes for a Counter-Reformation. Unfortunately, the kind of comment made by the angry travel companion is a repetition of what he often hears in Cologne today, even among his colleagues at the arts faculty of the *Universitas studii Coloniensis*. The heretics get blamed for everything. He's quick to remark that the horses are indifferent to Roman Catholic or Reformed fodder, as long as they get something to eat. And that they don't care whether a Roman Catholic or Reformed horse god watches over them. But when he takes a closer look at the pyre-worn follower, he refrains from the perhaps too-snippy remark. Instead, he says softly to his son: "Perhaps when you're my age and traveling by riverboat, you won't be dependent on horses anymore. I was just reading in *Acta Eruditorum* that Papin designed a steam-powered boat."

The complaining travel companion hears Pieter's remark and says, "A Papist invention to crush heretical horse dealers? That's good news."

Pieter winks discreetly at Henriette. Both share a sad smile. Ignorance simply can't disappear by magic. Their traveling companion is no exception. Despite the available information,

many people don't know that Denis Papin is an eminent physicist. And he has no idea that Papin is a Calvinist and chose to flee France for Reformed countries. Pieter wonders how long it will be before in Cologne *Acta Eruditorum* will be a suspicious magazine. The Jesuits proclaim that the *Journal des Sçavans* is more credible. He senses how the academics are dividing into two groups. On the one hand, you have those who swear by the *Journal*, on the other hand you have who do not limit reading to *Journal* and *Acta*, but also the English *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*.

As always when his thoughts wander to the Society of Jesus, he has mixed feelings. As an academic, he admires the intellectual capacity of his conversation partners, whom he knows belong to the Society. As a teacher, he is painfully aware of how the Society is being used by the Church, in the name of faith, to drive an ever-widening wedge of ignorance between scholars and the common people. Recently, he heard yet another disturbing story. In early April, the volcanic archipelago of the Azores suffered an earthquake on *Terceira*. Ten days later, panic was widespread. Rumours circulated that the entire island would be destroyed. These rumours were spread by two priests, a Franciscan and a Jesuit. Penitential processions and mass self-flagellation to obtain divine grace followed. Pieter, with the best will in the world, cannot understand how this kind of attitude differs from what the Church calls the pagan rituals of pagans and primitive peoples. How is it possible that someone who is responsible for education and can therefore spread knowledge can lead people to suffering in this way?

Pieter sits down next to Henriette, pulls his 14-year-old son towards him and looks at the sleeping John.
"Would it perhaps have been better if we had traveled by stagecoach after all?" she asks.
"The journey might be a little shorter, but the boat trip is definitely better for the boys' health. And the stagecoach was also considerably more expensive."
"Is the road so terribly bad to travel by carriage? They've been working on standardising the carriage axle lengths to improve track formation."
Pieter looks at Henriette with a smile: "Are you thinking about Claudius' offer?"
She nods.
"He wrote that he could stay in Frankfurt as long as we will, and that he would be very pleased if travelling back with him in his carriage."
"Let's discuss that proposal with him calmly. He'll surely be able to tell us more about the road conditions. I especially don't want our boys to suffer any back injuries. And then there's the safety issue." He adds in a whisper: "Imagine groups walking around, incited by the kind of talk of our traveling companion there. I don't know how quickly the rumours will spread about our good friend who appears to be within the Roman Catholic world more and more *persona non grata*."

Claudius gives up trying to read, now that the carriage is rocking quite a bit on this stretch of road. He reflects on the upcoming visit from friends. He's very excited to finally meet Wolfgang in person after years of intensive correspondence.

They've been using Tassis's services for years which is constantly improving.

Twenty-seven years ago, he met Pieter as a young man. He vividly remembers the lively and intelligent boy who spoke of the task of teachers to disseminate knowledge and science. He often commented on the miserable living conditions of those living in the countryside. He could get quite worked up about the poor school system. City servants often didn't get to read because of the very school that was supposed to teach them that skill. He fondly remembers how he introduced Pieter to Henriette, six years his senior. He quickly understood that Pieter inherited his intellectual wealth from Wolfgang. Now that he's turned sixty, Wolfgang can look back on an interesting life. His stay in Amsterdam was certainly the highlight of it. Claudius can barely contain his impatience to finally hear from Wolfgang everything he knew about Comenius.

In one of his last letters, Wolfgang discusses *Pieter Paul Rubens* at length, not as an artist but as a diplomat. Wolfgang's father was quite familiar with how Rubens, as a court painter during that turbulent period for the Netherlands, built a network of contacts. This allowed him to act as a negotiator between the royal and ducal houses, who were at odds with each other. Rubens was an influential patrician. He had certainly benefited financially from the Counter-Reformation. This is ironic considering that his Calvinist father had previously been forced to flee Antwerp for fear of Alva's wrath after the iconoclasm of 1566. So, Claudius thinks, the diplomat was somewhat overshadowed by the wealthy artist. Would Rubens have ever

known that the institution of the Counter-Reformation burned scholars at the stake or silenced them in the name of their interpretation of God? What sense of God would this exuberant painter, who rendered both Greek myths and biblical scenes with lots of coloured flesh, have possessed? Or is it better to speak of a spiritual feeling? It is a question that often preoccupied this bishop *in partibus infidelium*. How does each person experience his or her spirituality in inner intimacy? And is the sense of God an imposition or an experience? Over the years, he learned that it is difficult, if not impossible, to debate this with most of his colleagues without coming dangerously close to the point where he would be accused of heresy. He thinks back to the good conversation on this subject with Benedetto Odescalchi after he became Pope Innocent XI. It was shortly after the pope had publicly condemned the slave trade, a few years before his death. Now that he is returning from Rome, his strong doubts are growing again after the appointment of Pietro Ottoboni as Pope. He immediately understood the heavy political manoeuvrings. This pope is a merchant of influence. Claudius watches with dismay how he completely undermines the work of his predecessor in a short time…

Thanks to the friendships Claudius maintained with some archivists in Rome and Florence, he was able to consult a copy of the recently printed *De Motu Antiquiora* of Galileo. The scholar himself spoke about *scripta mea*. What particularly fascinates Claudius is the way Galileo spent almost his entire life working on the text. This makes it possible to clearly follow his successive doubts and reformulations. Can't doubts about the

nature of things and the nature of movement justify doubts about the nature of man and his spirituality? What particularly bothers Claudius is what he calls the circular reasoning with which high dignitaries of the Church Institution silenced the elder Galileo, while the scholar himself continued to try to understand how Aristotle would have thought had he lived in his time. Perhaps, Claudius chuckles, the dogmatic stance of the inquisitors would have condemned Aristotle himself for evolving in his thought while others decided to establish his time-bound hypotheses as eternal truths.

Suddenly the carriage stops. He's startled out of his thoughts. He hears the coachman get off his seat. He looks outside and decides to stretch his legs too. A little further on are two other carriages. A double-boom carriage that strongly resembles his *Berline* and which appears to come from the opposite direction, stands still on the road. In its own direction lies a half-tilted carriage, the *flèche* appears to be damaged due to deep ruts at this layover. One of the coachmen has gone to the nearby village to seek help. There's no other option but to wait for manpower to lift the damaged coach out of the way. He orders his coachman to inquire at the small castle next to the village whether Bishop Claudius Cardinalis can be accommodated there for the night. It won't be possible to reach the abbey today, where he plans to rest for a few days before continuing on to Frankfurt.

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Three weeks have passed. Pieter, Henriette, and their children have settled into the spacious townhouse of Pieter's parents,

Wolfgang and Hildegarde. The boys took several long walks with their grandfather, who entertains them with the history of the city. They made a lengthy visit to the printing house where Wolfgang sets some of his texts. John, in particular, is fascinated by the entire printing process and, as soon as he returns home, asks Wolfgang to let him into his library. A few days later, Hildegarde goes looking for her grandson for the umpteenth time because he didn't respond to the meal bell. She finds him engrossed in the German-Latin version of Comenius's *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. The boy struggles a bit. He has to interrupt his reading about the professions between the description of the tailor and that of the shoemaker. But the announcement that a new guest is joining them piques his curiosity.

When Hildegarde and John enter the spacious dining room, the rest of the family is already seated at the table. As usual, Wolfgang sits at the head of the table. Pieter isn't sitting to his right, as usual. A tall figure in simple church robes has taken his place between father and son. A chair is vacant to Wolfgang's left. Hildegarde gestures to John to sit there, next to his mother and across from the new guest.

The man smiles at John and says "Hello John. I know almost everything about you, of course, but you won't remember me. You were only three years old when I left Cologne for a while."

John looks at the man intently. "And yet… your face, your voice…"

He looks first at his mother and then at his father and exclaims, "Of course, you must be Claudius. Mother and Father told us we would meet here!"

Hildegarde clears her throat, and silence falls. Claudius is asked if he would like to say grace. After, as he humorously puts it, "having fulfilled that formality with God," he breaks the bread and distributes it across the table. A hearty meat broth is ladled onto each plate, ready to dip the pieces of bread. Hildegarde announces for one of the following days *papas peruanorum*. Since Carolus Clusius planted those tubers in his garden here in Frankfurt about a hundred years ago, they have quickly become popular in the region. Only the Jerusalem artichoke beats the *papas*, perhaps because of the similarity in taste to the widely used common artichoke.

"Your father tells me you're locking yourself up in your grandfather's library these days," Claudius begins, looking at John. "Are you planning to become a monk?"

"No, I don't think so. But I find it fascinating to learn about how things used to be, and also about how the world works. Grandfather gave me *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* to read. Do you know it?"

Claudius laughs heartily. "Wolfgang and Pieter, once a teacher, always a teacher! You continue to use your language teaching methods consistently, at least within your own family."

And turning to John: "I know many of the works of the author of *Orbis* and your parents and grandparents too. Did you know that my friend Wolfgang knew the man personally?"

"Is that true, Wolfgang, sir, Grandfather?" asks John.

"Yes, my boy, that's right. Maybe I can reminisce one of these days. What do you think, Hildegarde?"

"Just know what to tell the boy and what to keep to yourself."

“Do I hear a hint of some secret here?” asks Claudius.
Wolfgang shakes his head. “Only the memories of our youth and the time when we met in Amsterdam, in the *Huis van de Hoofden*.”
“When were you in Amsterdam, Grandfather?” asks John.
“I stayed there twice. The first time was fifty years ago, when I arrived as a 10-year-old boy with my parents and your father’s aunt and uncle. The second time, I was 21. Your father was born there. A few years later, we settled in Frankfurt.”
“And why did you end up in Amsterdam?” asks Claudius. “That’s a long story. A story that actually begins in Köthen, where I was born.”
“Köthen, one of the places where Wolfgang Ratke worked,” Pieter explains, “is located about 55 Prussian miles west of Leszno.”
Claudius’ facial expression shows that he is not quite following.
“Ian Amos lived in Leszno twice before settling in *Belgium Fœderatum*.”
“And Wolfgang Ratke and Ian Amos had a certain influence on me when I was making choices as a young man about my teaching,” Wolfgang concludes.

Wolfgang

Köthen

"Wolfgang, are you going for a walk with Dad? I want to go out by the river for a bit."
"Yes, Father!" The five-year-old toddler places his fist in his father's large hand, and together they walk down the street. They head toward the small river *Ziethe*, bordered by grass and shrubs. It's spring, and the boy watches the butterflies with delight. His father has him observe the colourful insects intently every time they land on a flower. It's as if they stick a long tongue into the flowers. Only many years later, just before his departure from Amsterdam, Wolfgang will read other observations in *Metamorphosis naturalis* by Johannes Goedaert. There, in Walcheren, he made the study of butterflies and other insects his life's work.

Today, father and son bid farewell to their city. Wolfgang was born here on June 21, 1630. His father was twenty-two at the time and a novice teacher at the Latin school where he still teaches Latin and High German grammar. He is known for often using the vernacular even to teach grammar, faithful to his recently deceased teacher, Ratke. He is unaware that at this very moment, Ian Amos Comenius is putting the finishing touches to his *Janua Linguarum, the Door of Languages*.
The family will leave Köthen early next week. Wolfgang's father received an offer as a professor in the newly established *Athenaeum Illustre* from Amsterdam. The salary there will be

significantly higher than what he earns in Köthen. Furthermore, Wolfgang's parents are convinced that their three children will benefit from growing up in the Republic, known for its tolerant attitude towards religion and scientific work.
The family will be taken by cart to the Elbe, two Prussian miles away. A fairly long river trip will then follow to Hamburg. Then they can sail on to the Zuiderzee, without really having to enter deep in the *Mare Germanicum* They can always travel between the mainland and the islands with land in sight, with only the Zuiderzee itself potentially being rough. However, Wolfgang's father has been assured that the crossing is usually quite calm during the summer months.
The risks associated with the journey do not outweigh the constant danger of remaining in this turbulent region. Only a few years ago, the city of Magdeburg was almost completely massacred. The warring armies of the Catholic League and the turbulent alliances of princes and lords in the Evangelical Union are a constant source of suffering for the entire population of the German Empire. If it still makes sense to speak of a German Empire. It increasingly appears that the conflicts between Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists are slowly but surely turning into protracted riots between warring royal houses, all of which are wanting to *recapture 'lost property'*.

Wolfgang's parents always keep a low profile when discussing war and alliances. They know that speaking too openly carries a certain risk in the small community of Köthen, where everyone is fairly well-informed about the religious denomination of each other. After all, it was only a little over a generation ago that

Pope Clement VIII consigned Giordano Bruno to the stake. This is the same Clement VIII who first banned a new berry-infused drink from the land of the Moors, only to later permit it. Those who already used the drink saw its great advantages compared to beer, mead, or wine. The *kahve* or caffee, which the Turks have apparently known for some time, sharpens the mind rather than dulling it, as the drinks customary here do. At least that's the opinion of the monks, who like to use it to stay awake longer. So the Pope changed his mind. He gave his blessing over the drink and decided that the unbelievers shouldn't be the only ones to enjoy it. Wolfgang's father can't help but think that the Holy Father isn't infallible when it comes to *kahve*. Perhaps he didn't receive very precise instructions from heaven in this regard.

More serious are the concerns of this disciple of Wolfgang Ratke regarding universal access to knowledge and science. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew are important, but isn't it really time to pay more attention to writing and publishing in the vernacular? In the final letter outlining all the formalities for the appointment to the *Athenaeum Illustre*, Gerardus Vossius refers the *Cercle Conrart*. That circle was founded a few years earlier in France by the Calvinist Valentin Conrart. Richelieu has already announced that he will soon provide the *circle* with the name of the name *French Academy*. It will be an institution for the defense of the French language. Wolfgang's father reacts enthusiastically. Despite their religious differences, he writes in his reply to his contractor, these men demonstrate their wisdom by dedicating an institution to their language. Could this also be

done for High German and Low German? He hopes so. It could benefit the school and stimulate the desire to learn among younger children who only know the vernacular. Much still needs to be done in this area of learning. We often overlook the children of the common people when discussing the transmission of knowledge. These children may receive a brief moral education, but it is drilled into them by having them recite predetermined edifying texts. Teaching them to actually read is not an option, and teaching them to write is even less so. Even today, being able to read but not to write or to calculate is no obstacle for being a village schoolmaster. The fact that many schoolmasters are not members of the clergy is not a plus. The latter, in principle, have had some formal education, even if the art of teaching is not usually discussed.

Wolfgang's father's general impression of the school, for the people of maids, servants, farmers, and tenants, not to mention the serfs and bondsmen, is one of abject misery. In the conflict-ridden German Empire, attending school is certainly not the primary concern. The constantly roving armies and groups of soldiers make entire regions unsafe. With the exception of one long siege, Köthen has thus far been spared. But Wolfgang's father hears depressing stories from itinerant clergy and refugees about the widespread devastation.

Schools… in the French Empire, the situation isn't much better than here. In many cities, private individuals, religious orders, or the episcopate establish a school. These aren't always accessible to everyone. Independent teachers rarely clearly announce their actual knowledge and skills, opening classes whenever and

wherever they see an opportunity. According to the information Wolfgang's father has, there are mainly little schools, also known as ABC-schools. In such a school, children learn little more than letters and edifying texts. In the Spanish Empire, there is the *escuela de gramática* and among the English the *Grammar School*. But they are not for everyone just like it is the case with the *Latin schools* in the German Empire. Wolfgang's father recently heard about a Jansenist priest and a school where French grammar would be taught. According to available information, there are plans for this at the abbey of *Port Royal in the fields*.

The Reformed like to present *Belgium Fœderatum* as a modern, flourishing, and tolerant society. But Wolfgang's father knows very well that in the *Republic of the Seven United Netherlands* class distinctions remain decisive, just as in the rest of Europe. In villages and small towns with a school, being a schoolmaster is generally a small sideline for a church official. No special training is required. If local circumstances necessitate hiring someone from outside, adventurers who have never been teachers and have other professions often emerge. Meanwhile, there are municipalities where an annual salary for the schoolmaster is included in the municipal budget. Frequently this amounts to nothing more than alms. What does signify the annual salary of 50 guilders paid by Utrecht, for example, compare to the 2.500 guilders Vossius receives in the *Athenaeum* on top of the free housing? His own annual salary for the first year amounts to 950 guilders plus housing. No, the commoners are not entitled to preceptors, nor to skilled teachers. Surgeons,

clog makers, painters, book binders, messengers, take on the minor profession of schoolmaster in addition. It requires little muscle power. And now that the Republic has become almost completely Reformed, the church does not exerts less influence on the school. Quite the opposite. The Reformed Church quickly gains a firm grip on all public offices, including that of schoolmaster. Church and State remain one. With the same disastrous consequences for the education of the lower classes, just as is the case with the Roman Catholic Church. The larger congregations are increasingly focusing on the first grades of Latin schools. These are generally intended to prepare the relatively small group of 10- to 15-year-old sons of patricians for university with public, church-sponsored education. Wolfgang's father knows the *Athenea*, including the Illustrious School that recruited him, not being open to everyone. Vossius also told him about the great tensions among various groups of Reformed Christians in the Republic. The Remonstrants were influenced by Erasmus, who remained Roman Catholic. They had a liberal view of Christianity. Love, freedom, and tolerance played an important role in this. The Counter-Remonstrants, on the other hand, adhered to Calvin's doctrine of predestination. In doing so, they primarily targeted the less educated, the *kleyne luyden*. Among the Remonstrants, one does find a large group of regents. But they are only very slow to heal wounds. There's still plenty of gunpowder in the powder keg.

Wolfgang's father is convinced that the problem lies deeper. According to him, much has to do with royal family's desires to permanently keep the common people under control, regardless

of religious beliefs. Freedom and tolerance are two dangerous edges of the same knife that threatens those who wield power and possessions. Schools open to everyone with all available knowledge… No. Those who possess large properties or aspire to absolute power shudder at the thought. It's too dangerous a concept. Relative tolerance is only permissible for those already selected. The rest are poor and unfit for study. Therefore, strict supervision of what is taught is best. In primary school, especially in the village school, reading is important. Writing is much less so. Reading in one's own language allows people to read parts of the Heidelberg Catechism, perhaps even the Bible. Confession of sins must be central. The young people must constantly remember from the very beginning that man constantly chooses evil and that only true faith brings salvation. That remains the message, Wolfgang's father thinks somewhat sadly as they walk back home.
And yet, the Republic seems undeniably more tolerant than the surrounding states. Wolfgang's parents believe moving to Amsterdam is the least bad solution for their children.

Amsterdam

Wolfgang's family has lived in Amsterdam for almost five years. Young Wolfgang just turned 10. His father gave him the High German version of *The Door of Languages Unlocked* as a gift, as soon as Wolfgang started reading. That's going pretty well, just like the writing.
From the De Geer family, with whom Wolfgang's father quickly came into contact, he heard that a *Belgica Versione* is in the

making. That will have *Ontsloote Deure der Taalen* as title. He orders a copy in advance. This extensive work by Ian Amos Comenius contains recent information on everything known about the world and humanity since the beginning of time.

Along the way, Wolfgang's father established contacts in the academic world of the Republic. He corresponds with colleagues from Illustrious Schools in other cities across the country. In Amsterdam itself, he meet members of the wealthy and educated bourgeoisie who still prefer to call themselves patricians. The Calvinist Louis de Geer, originally from Liège, was particularly helpful in this regard. This merchant arrived in the Republic shortly before Wolfgang's family. He purchased the *Huis der Hoofden* on the Keizersgracht, including his furniture and furnishings. His lucrative business consisted primarily of arms dealing. This didn't inhibit his house from being a meeting place for a very diverse and erudite group, often from regions whose rulers were at war with each other.

According to Louis De Geer, there are copies of *Janua Linguarum Reserata* in six different languages. And as far as he knows, translations are currently in progress in another six languages, including Arabic. The work was first published in 1633 in Leszno. Just seven years later, it became the second-bestselling printed book after the Bible.

It was learned in the *Athenaeum* that Galileo was ultimately condemned by the Catholic Church because his scientific work was said to conflict with Aristotelian science and the Bible. Both Counter-Remonstrants and Remonstrants agree with the Roman Catholics. According to them, the Ptolemaic model is the only

correct model, especially now Tycho Brahe provided an updated mathematical description. Nevertheless, Vossius tried to get Galileo to come to Amsterdam as a visiting professor at the *Athenaeum*. He didn't succeed. Galileo was too old for such a long journey. Anyhow, had he come, the expected debate wouldn't have driven a new wedge between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants. Quite the opposite.
But Wolfgang's secret observation of the public interventions of the current stadtholder, Frederick of Nassau, shows him that he keeps a low profile, although he sympathises with the Remonstrants because of their tolerant attitude toward dissenters. There's a lot of controversy surrounding Descartes' theses, but that doesn't stop the philosopher, like others, from using his words freely. The Remonstrants can support him without fear of reprisals from above.

A month ago, the Antwerp painter Rubens passed away. He was known for his exuberant mythological and biblical scenes that had enhanced the splendour of so many churches in Catholic Europe. Although he is also known here, today in the Republic, people are more often talking about the 34-year-old Rembrandt van Rijn. He usually has to endure a lot of criticism. But he also has his admirers. Wolfgang's father often takes his children on studio visits. Not only to Van Rijn, but also to other painters who have to make do with their meagre income. Wolfgang's father sometimes buys landscapes and still lifes mainly to please the painters. This is the case with Aert van der Neert. Until his death, he also frequently visited Anthonie Verstraelen. Young Wolfgang enjoys visiting Barend Avercamp's

studio. There, he is always filled with deep admiration for the '*narrative paintings*' of his late deaf uncle Hendrick Avercamp. His father recently explained to him that Hendrick succeeded in entertaining his 'audience' with a brush instead of words.

As in other cities of the Sovereign States of the Republic, in Amsterdam attention to schools for the lower classes remains rather weak. As well *Stad en Lande* as in *Friesland* own adapted Haneboeken are in circulation. In other states, the ABC horn books are still widely used. *Utrecht* and *Gelderland* are considering creating adapted Haneboeken based on the model of the Northern States. In many schools, the vernacular is the language of instruction. This simplifies reading letters and syllables, but on the other hand, exposes fewer children to what is still the language of science.
Using the national language as the vehicular language is not only the case in the Reformed Republic. Guest speakers at the *Athenaeum* refer the Petite École of Port-Royal. The school's goal seems to be to combine intellectual excellence with greater care for the native language. The teachers hired deliberately broke with the Jesuit educational system popular in Roman Catholic Europe, which used Latin as the primary language. But learning to read remains a privilege of the urban upper middle class, regardless of the approach. In both French and Spanish regions, it is said, this middle class joins the nobility and clergy. Almost all nobles can read, and most can write as well. This is far from the case among small traders, craftsmen, and the lower ranks of the army. Generally, only one in two people reads, often only one in three, not to mention writing.

The reports coming from England are not much better. During the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, while all the upper classes were educated, this was far from the case for all other classes. Writing skills were minimal, often limited to signing a document. In Essex county, 7 out of every 10 yeomen, but only 3 out of every ten husbandman. It is just one example of many.
It would be wrong to think that the public is being rescued from ignorance. The classical languages remain important filters for what is and isn't generally accessible. This works both ways. Some natural philosophers who began writing in their own language quickly switch to Latin when they want to engage in discussion with others across their own language border.

It is not the concern of the nobility and the wealthy patricians. Two years ago, Wolfgang's parents watched in amazement as Maria de Medici was given a royal welcome in Amsterdam. At *Athenaeum Illustre* it was known as a diplomatic stunt. The queen was seeking foreign support. Her son's confidant had banished her from the country. Seeking support from the Republic actually meant recognising a Reformed ally. It seemed like a provocation against Cardinal Richelieu, who ruled in the name of the king.
Apparently, Maria de Medici was unfamiliar with the comfortable journey by barge. Although this was a common mode of travel in the Republic and on the major rivers of the German Empire, the Queen Mother arrived by carriage. Or was this simply to give the arrival a more classic and festive touch and maintain a regal appearance?
The distinguished guest visited the East India House, where she

was served an Indonesian rice table. This served as a showroom to how well the Republic is doing thanks to the commercial activities of the Dutch East India Company. A silent reminder to potential spies that the Republic is here to stay, as the wealthy bourgeoisie was told.

Another frequently heard story is that the Catholic Maria de Medici learned the miraculous rosary of the Jesuit Francis Xavier was in Amsterdam. The priest had died almost a hundred years earlier in the East during his missionary work. After his death, his rosary had been brought by Jesuits to Salvador, Brazil. On one of his raids, Piet Hein had captured the Jesuits residing there, including the rosary, and brought it to Amsterdam. But the rosary eventually ended up in the hands of Albert Coenraad Burgh, who, among other things, is the curator of the *Athenaeum*. Burgh was formerly a well-known Remonstrant but over time became increasingly Roman Catholic. As mayor, he visited one of the Jesuits captured by Piet Hein several times. During these visits, the rosary became his property, perhaps in exchange for the prisoner's release. And now the rosary is in the possession of Maria de Medici. Two versions of this have been circulating persistently for the past two years. Did Albert Burgh sell the rosary, or did he donate it? On the *Athenaeum* a heated debate started about ecclesiastical symbols, wealth, faith, spirituality, …

And speaking of wealth and poverty.

Wolfgang's family is doing well. Since its arrival in Amsterdam, it had experienced a relatively stable and uneventful integration process as a result of the family father's appointment at the

Athenaeum.
The vast majority of the population in the Republic, on the other hand, is having a very difficult time. The constant threat of war, resulting from the religiously charged bickering between royal houses, weighs heavily on everyone. Moreover, the regularly recurring plague epidemics are decimating entire families. This immediately means less work force, which poses an additional burden.
Wolfgang's father's opinion of the Republic's population as rather fertile and subdued took an immediate hit during their first years here. A whole scheme involving tulip bulbs caused many people to lose their heads in an attempt to enrich. He was astonished to see that the price of a single tulip bulb could be higher than his rather generous annual income. Suddenly, many people lost all their composure. Growers had long been accustomed to selling bulbs before they were harvested. But now, middlemen not being growers themselves were frequently buying and selling the bulbs long before they were in the fields. Many were attracted by the potential for large profits from the rapidly becoming illegal "cattle trade" where what doesn't yet exist is already for sale. People appeared everywhere, hoping to become rich without any effort other than to compose *ad hoc* colleges trading on paper. Others were simply thieves, selling worthless goods to unsuspecting buyers. Many ultimately ended up poorer than before the peak sales, but the most astute traders made agreements among themselves not to lose everything.

While the pamphlets and the streets are still offering tulip bulbs, not a bulb but a tuber appears at the vegetable market

from the Spanish Netherlands. Silently and gradually. People know and tell how ship's crews deal with scurvy. When on board, *xipotatl* food that the West Indian population had introduced them to, held of the disease for longer periods. Gradually, the tuber, whose name was corrupted to *potato* was planted in many monastery gardens. Monks cultivated the crop. This had been the case in Nieuwpoort for a good ten years. In Amsterdam, it's not yet cultivated, but travellers tell how, both around Groningen and Leiden, the potato is somewhat expanding the scarce food supply in villages and small towns.

The Magister family receives regular news from the German Empire. There is considerable correspondence with Köthen and Frankfurt.

Wolfgang's uncle and aunt still live in Köthen. They write little about the political uncertainty. They do, however, keep Wolfgang's father informed about the state of affairs in the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*. Wolfgang Ratke, as elsewhere, has since long made himself impossible in this society. Yet his influence is still felt in promoting the vernacular and making the languages in which science and knowledge are written accessible. It is reassuring to know that Prince Ludwig I von Anhalt-Köthen continues to devote more of his time to the society and to promoting peaceful projects than to alliances and warfare. Negotiations are underway with the Tassis family to establish a permanent postal order in Köthen.

Fairly good news arrives from Frankfurt. Wolfgang's great-uncle is a printer and claims to be making a substantial profit from printing almanacs and small books. Moreover, Frankfurt

continues to attract scholars to publish their work. The Frankfurt book market is a lively meeting place full of business opportunities. Yet, there is also some concern. Just as tensions exist between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants in the Dutch Republic, the division between Lutheran and Calvinist reformers is palpable in Frankfurt. The Calvinists are increasingly concentrating in Hanau, known as a zone of affluent immigrants.
Wolfgang's mother maintains her own correspondence. Discreetly, she contacts Anna Maria Van Schurman. At the age of 29, Anna has just been admitted to Utrecht University through Voetius' intercession. She has to hide behind a screen during classes so that the male students cannot see her. According to her own account, she obtained this favor as a result of her Latin-written argument about the suitability of the female mind for science and literature. A favor, not a right…

What Wolfgang would only understand fifteen years later is that his father's admiration for Wolfgang Ratke, and subsequently for Ian Amos Comenius, had far from made things easy for him as a teacher and professor. Yet, there was a reason for that admiration. He himself struggled at school. As a ten-year-old, already somewhat older boy, he ended up in the classes organised by Ratke in Köthen between 1619 and 1622. And then, learning suddenly seemed so much easier.
Wolfgang Ratke believed that a good teacher must be able to distinguish each student's talents to keep everyone engaged and focused. The work must be sufficiently enjoyable to bring the student joy in what they are doing. Furthermore, it is important

to constantly check whether the student understands what they are reading. Good work is rewarded; bad work is punished, but in a way that doesn't disrupt the students' love for their teacher. Wolfgang's father apparently never betrayed this love, as he decided even as a student that if he later had a son, he would be named Wolfgang like his teacher. Throughout his life as a teacher of others, he constantly tried to ensure that they enjoyed what they did at school and also learned at the lectures of the *Athenaeum*.

For Ratke, it was all about the art of teaching, didactics. In 1619, he and Ian Amos Comenius from far-off Bohemia had never heard of each other. Anyhow, Comenius' interest in *mathetics* or the *art of learning* would probably have passed him. What Ratke shared with the man from Bohemia was a concern for language education. This had to be based on reading meaningful words and expressions that students could understand. Furthermore, both believed that with young children, the vernacular could also be used to take the first steps in human and natural philosophy. The school could use High German or any other vernacular to ensure the learning of all arts and sciences.

According to Ratke, such a school would easily and peacefully establish a common language, a common government, and ultimately a common religion throughout the Empire. But Ratke encountered considerable opposition. In Magdeburg, his critics argued that his intention was not simply to reorganize the school, but rather to achieve a worldwide spiritual reformation. Despite widespread interest in and for the *Fruchtbringende Gesellshaft* founded in 1617 under the auspices of several

princes, including Ludwig I von Anhalt-Köthen, conservatives felt the time was not ripe to even consider High German as a literary and scientific language. The Calvinists then accused Ratke of being a Lutheran. This resulted in an eight-month prison sentence, enough to destroy Prince Ludwig's initial interest in school reform.

In Amsterdam, Wolfgang's father gains further insight into Comenius' work. De Geer has just shown him some texts he received from England. They will later integrate his *Didactica Magna*. It reassures the teacher to receive further confirmation that he is not alone in his ideas regarding the art of teaching. Someone else he can rely on is Etienne de Courcelles, with whom he quickly becomes friends. He has been a fellow member of the Remonstrants in Amsterdam since 1634. De Courcelles is a very well-read man however he has great difficulty finding decent paid work. Out of necessity, he spends a lot of time revising proofs with printer Johannes Blaauw. The two men often spend time together, and De Courcelles is a regular at the Magisters. From their conversations, Wolfgang's father believes he can see a kind of solidarity between Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants towards scholasticism, both in the study of the seven liberal arts and in the other emerging sciences. His personal experience taught him that the Remonstrants in their arguments go further and often use the methodological doubt systematised by Descartes. And that's not possible for the Counter-Remonstrants, according to him for dogmatic reasons. When he addresses Courcelles about this, the latter promptly recalls Wolfgang's father's own statement:

someone who doubts proves he thinks, someone who repeats proves someone else thought. He calls that statement 'the beautiful synthesis'.

Somewhere between Cologne and Aachen, a local lord of the minor nobility has a second son. No one can predict whether the firstborn will not die of the plague or some other disease. Nor can anyone know whether little Claus will struggle through his first years. For the time being, both sons receive the same upbringing.

Claus is two and Wolfgang is twelve the year René Descartes receives Ian Amos Comenius at *Endegeest Castle*. It is no coincidence. Comenius' friend Abraham Heidanus is a professor in Leiden and has great sympathy for Descartes. Ian Amos stays at home of Descartes' friend, Adriaan Heerebrood, after his return from England. Ultimately, he was not interested in settling in England for a longer period. He had initially considered it, but abandoned the plan for two reasons. His second wife, Dorothea, does not want to live in England. Furthermore, he makes a negative analysis of the political climate. The peace-loving priest is part of the Bohemian *Unity of the Brothers* that finds its inspiration in Jan Hus. He prefers to keep his distance from his radical English friends. Moreover, he receives quite a few job offers. Louis and Laurens De Geer want him in Sweden, Richelieu suggests he settles in France, and an invitation comes from Massachusetts to take up the directorship of the Harvard College.

But for the time being he is visiting Leiden, where Heidanus and Heerebrood persuade the two scholars to have a tête-à-tête.

René Descartes and Ian Amos Comenius meet at Endegeest Castle, where Descartes has settled in. They listen to each other, apparently calmly and thoughtfully, after which each takes the time to question the other at length.

From the sparse commentary that follows, the two scholars" friends quickly deduce that they are in complete agreement where their complete differences lie. This complete difference lies in their fundamental premise. Descartes separates philosophy and theology. For Comenius philosophy is part of his pansophy. Wolfgang's father also hears about the meeting between the two men. From what he reads and learns, he believes that both thinkers have converging ideas about certain consequences of being human. This includes its universal character and the capacity to think for oneself. But he also understands that they have completely different starting points. He is almost certain that certain statements by Descartes appeal to Comenius. Both have traveled considerably. Descartes comments on this by saying that travel teaches us that those who have feelings and attitudes that differ greatly from our own are not therefore barbarians or savages. Some may even be as right or more right than we are. Descartes therefore argues that one cannot simply adopt anyone's opinion and is therefore obligated to guide oneself. Perhaps Comenius wants to go further in mixing feelings and reasoning for this self-governance than what he thinks he understands to be Descartes' proposition.

Wolfgang's father considers how Descartes somewhat emulates the early philosophers. The perfect laws of nature, he argues,

operate outside of them. They can therefore only be masters of their own thoughts and have little affection for anything else. Perhaps Comenius, on the other hand, considers that cherishing these perfect laws of nature is part of human understanding.
Is the only human freedom, then, for Descartes, the consistent development of one's own thought process, in which doubt plays a significant role? Was that why he coined the now-appreciated and now-maligned expression *cogito ergo sum* into academia? Taken out of context, that phrase quickly divides less thoughtful colleagues into two camps: ardent supporters on the one hand, and scathing opponents on the other. Imagine!
Comenius is said to have claimed that *I think therefore I am* is too narrow an approach to being human, and that *I am therefore I a dream* completes man. Does he perhaps mean to say that he doubts not the *validity* of Descartes' remark but its *completeness*?
Both thinkers may perhaps follow Aristotle in his proposition that of the mind only *Logos* is eternal. That is precisely why it is clear that one must *think* to be, as Descartes puts it. One must *think, feel and know*, Comenius would add.
Wolfgang's father is aware that he will never have direct contact with Descartes. Perhaps he will never meet Comenius in person either. He writes down his own thoughts and places them among the bundle of papers he intends to give to his son. Who knows, maybe he will one day be able to use them.

Praeparationis iterum

In 1647 Wolfgang Magister is seventeen.
He will soon start his orientation trip. He decides to go on a

a *German journey* and a *A French journey* with a detour to the Confederation of the XIII Cantons. His father's correspondents will accommodate him at the various ports of call. He has already sent some personal belongings on ahead to some of his guesthouses. His first stop will be Frankfurt. His cousins have promised him lodgings. For several decades now, the network of connections between important trading places has been visibly improving. And this despite or cynically enough because of the many battles between land-hungry kings and the protracted conflicts between all those who proclaim their own faith as the true truth.

Wolfgang's parents and friends urged him to travel in light of reports of war so he could avoid battlefields and besieged cities. At the start of his journey, he knew it was best to avoid the Spanish Netherlands as long as a rumoured impending peace treaty wasn't confirmed.

After all, the world has looked a little different since he started going out with his father in and around Amsterdam as a 10-year-old boy.

After the death of Ferdinand of Austria, the Spanish Netherlands briefly had Francisco de Melo as governor. Ferdinand died six years earlier. The Spanish king had to temporarily abandon his wish to appoint his bastard son, Juan II of Austria, as governor. The opposition from the Madrid nobles was too strong. During the same period, a portion of the Portuguese nobility rallied around the House of Bragança and formed the Iberian Union. The Spanish king then appointed the loyal Portuguese nobles to posts outside the immediate Madrid area. At the beginning of

Francisco de Melo's short term, he seemed able to confront the French nobility in battle. He then intended to immediately push his army toward Paris. This caused panic in the capital but De Melo was defeated by the Duke of Enghien and his army at Rocroi. Therefore, Emanuel de Moura Cortereal, Marquis de Castel Rodrigo, replaced him in 1644. All the rumours are now about this man. Even in the Republic he is seen as an architect for peace negotiations between the Northern and Southern Netherlands.

Meanwhile, the French and Spanish royal houses continue to wage war. The leaders of the Republic are allies of the French ruler, not because they are great friends, but because they are at odds with the Spanish House of Habsburg. While protection of religion is the official argument for the numerous battles, it increasingly appears that Roman Catholic and Reformed rulers are simply forming alliances of convenience against Roman Catholic and Reformed rivals. Even in the German Empire, the alliances are not always clear, although the Emperor remains loyal to Rome.

Much has changed in France. The exiled Marie de Medici died in Cologne, where she had occupied a residence that Peter Paul Rubens had made available to her after her exile. Shortly thereafter, Richelieu died. Cardinal Mazarin succeeded him, and when Louis XIII died less than a year later, his five-year-old son became king. His mother, Anne of Austria, and Mazarin are therefore the de facto rulers of France today.

There's a disagreement between the Stadtholder and the States General regarding the border between the Republic and the

Spanish Netherlands. The dispute revolves around what to do with Antwerp. Frederick Hendrik wants to besiege the city and recapture it for the Republic. He even goes so far as to make a secret agreement with local nobles and guarantee religious freedom upon the capture of the city. But Amsterdam prefers not to see Antwerp as a competing port within the borders of the Republic. Ultimately, Antwerp extricates itself from the siege. The French military leaders capitalised on the attention the governor of the Spanish Netherlands was devoting to the northern border, conquering Kortrijk, Sint-Winoksbergen, Veurne, and Dunkirk at the southern border. But it wasn't just the conflicts that made the southern part of the Spanish Netherlands unsafe. Wolfgang received warnings that the plague was regularly flaring up there. In the affected region, it was believed that only divine intervention could alleviate human suffering. Recently, a brotherhood of penitents was formed in the coastal region of Flanders, whose main task was to depict the Way of the Cross. This brotherhood was recently approved by the church under the name *Sodality of the Crucified Saviour.* It currently has 116 members and hopes that, after its approval, penance processions will enable it to protect the region from the plague.

In the north of the continent, things also remain unsettled. During one of his business visits to Amsterdam, Louis de Geer advises young Wolfgang against venturing too far north. He knows why. Swedish Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna had launched a preemptive war against Denmark two years earlier, and Louis de Geer and Elias Trip are supplying the Swedes with weapons.

Wolfgang isn't so much interested in visiting Sweden as well in Elbing. Comenius is currently staying there and would like to meet the scholar. However, De Geer says, it's unclear how things will develop in Sweden and Pomerania. Other conflicts could arise. De Geer hints that Ian Amos might no longer be in Pomerania by the time Wolfgang heads north. He wants to reach his hometown of Köthen towards the end of his journey and travel from there to Elbing. For now, the young man has decided against going beyond Köthen.

The New World lies far beyond Wolfgang's travel plans. But he is eager to hear from those told in the *United Dutch Chartered East India Company*. Abel Janszoon Tasman maps the coasts of New Holland on behalf of the company. On the one hand, they want to know whether New Holland is part of *Southland.* According to older information, this is the large southern continent that keeps the planet in balance. On the other hand, the company is searching for new shipping routes that would speed up travel to and from the new world.

On one of his voyages, Tasman believed he had reached Staten Island. Brouwer has now refuted this. It is indeed new territory. The cartographers of the Republic named it New Zealand. Tasman then discovered another island south of New Holland, which he named Van Diemen's Land. It is now almost certain that New Holland is not part of *Southland*. Nobody knows yet whether New Zealand is part of it.

Wolfgang loves these stories of adventurous voyages to far-flung destinations. He enjoys talking with friends whose parents are connected to the East Indies. He's even had the opportunity to

speak with a captain's son twice. His father and his teachers at the Athenaeum warn, however, that those who tell stories often conceal far less pleasant adventures. Until recently, he believed this warning stemmed from his parents' fear that he might feel called to go to sea himself.

But then he hears a completely different story from one of his friends. It is about the *Patented West India Company* but the account is nevertheless sufficient to cast serious doubt on the benevolence of the exploration of all new territories. It concerns Willem Kieft. Wolfgang's friend heard it from returning New Netherlanders who could no longer tolerate Governor Kieft's infamy and his cover-up of the soldiers' brutal actions. Here, there is no longer any question of propagating faith, trading with the local population, or providing them with a better life. It concerns massacres by arbitrary soldiers, in which hundreds of native women and children were slaughtered like animals. The war-hungry governor was recalled but drowned on the return journey. Yet, many believe the story of the discouraged New Netherlanders. Many had already witnessed much from that same ruthless Amsterdam merchant.

Wolfgang hears other stories about trade with the New World. He begins to suspect that it is more a trade *at the expense of* the New World. He begins to ask questions and is able to examine some ship's logs. It gradually becomes clear to him that a large portion of the Company ships' trade is based on thinly veiled plunder. Nearly all maritime powers continue to attack ships sailing under foreign flags. In the port of call, the captured goods are then traded as a normal commercial transaction. The

network of trading houses from which the Republic derives its own wealth is largely a network of forts that besiege populated areas. The occupied areas are sometimes on their second or third European occupier. Just as in battles closer to home, there too, villagers and townspeople are the playthings of rulers and their soldiers. Trading houses can be conquests or exchange goods among Royal Houses. This was recently the case on the West African coast. Mutual treaties and agreements after a conflict serve to exchange entire territories and redraw borders. In Europe, cities often make demands and extract freedoms from the ruling nobility. This does not happen for the local population in the New World. In exchanges, even conventional trade changes hands, not just goods. Ship logs often mention the arrival of people purchased or captured to work as slaves. The Reformed traders from the Republic are just as eager to comply with this request as the Catholic traders. Just before leaving for Frankfurt, Wolfgang hears something that gives him the chills. He has no time to confirm the report's veracity. He learns that Laurens, the son of Louis de Geer, with whom his father shares an interest in Comenius' work, also allegedly has a vested interest in the slave trade. The young man cannot grasp the ethics of someone who is interested in a better school system while simultaneously viewing people as commodities. What kind of school system does such a person actually want? And for whom?

Meanwhile, what Wolfgang's father had foreseen is coming to pass. A vast majority of the clergy, that is, the church world, and the closely associated academic world, are radically opposed to

Descartes. Incidentally, you don't have to be an astronomer-astrologer to foresee that.
Voetius, Rector Magnificus of the University of Utrecht, wastes no time. He attacks every form of new philosophy. Descartes is wrong. Galileo and Copernicus are wrong. Voetius, who teaches dogmatics, among other things, and opposes what he considers the deviant ideas of the Remonstrants, quickly becomes a leading opponent of Descartes.
Some see it differently. The same year that Voetius ends his term as Rector Magnificus in Utrecht, Etienne de Courcelles finally receives the recognition he deserves in Amsterdam. In 1645, he becomes a professor at the Remonstrant Seminary of Amsterdam. In his lectures, he clearly demonstrates his admiration for Descartes. Wolfgang's father is pleased that his longtime conversation partner finally receives a position commensurate with his erudition. *Athenaeum Illustre* on the other hand seems a bit like marking time. He can't give up the impression that few colleagues are actually taking a stand. He's corresponding with his uncle whose sons will be taking care of his own son at the start of his orientation trip about this. He's also discussed it with his wife and their two other children. Could he possibly consider looking for a suitable position in Frankfurt? There too, there are signs that a conflict that seemed endless is coming to an end.

From Amsterdam to Frankfurt

Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik has died and is succeeded by his son William II of Orange. It appears that the stadtholder will

once again have a dynastic line in the federated Republic. Not everyone is thrilled about this, especially the wholesalers of Amsterdam. History has already shown that there is a great danger that the personal interests of the dynasty will trump the interests of the federated provinces and cities.

Wolfgang will not participate in the commentary. He now has all the necessary documents to travel safely from Amsterdam to Frankfurt, as well as credentials that can help him further with diplomats and representatives of the Republic, both in the German Empire and in Paris.

Wolfgang departs for Gorinchem, partly by barge, partly by carriage. He sees the excavation work on the canals that will gradually connect the major cities of the southernmost provinces. What shocks him are the conditions in which hundreds of men, huddled together with shovels and pickaxes, are working. He finds it hard to imagine anyone volunteering for such work. He dreams of mechanical men replacing these hardworking, bent and broken bodies.

Utrecht is his first overnight stop, about 10 Dutch miles from Amsterdam. He stays with one of his father's correspondents, who works at the recently founded university. The day after his arrival he visits the herb garden. At the invitation of his host, he also attends a lecture by Regius. Wolfgang listens to a speech in which this philosopher and physician proposes, among other things, that there is an organic connection between body and mind. He also speculates that the heart is nothing more than a pump that circulates blood throughout the body. At another point, he touches on Copernicus' heliocentrism. The young man

becomes somewhat shy when his host introduces him to Regius as a promising young scion of the Magister family, associated with the *Athenaeum Illustre* from Amsterdam. From Regius, he hears some details about the meeting between Descartes and Comenius. What the philosopher tells him is almost identical to what his father had heard about that meeting a few years earlier.

Following Regius' lecture, Wolfgang asks his host if it's possible to visit the Smeetoren, where the observatory has been located for several years. On the last evening of Wolfgang's stay in Utrecht, they receive permission. The night is clear when keeper Aert Janszoon grants them access to the platform. At Regius' urging, his colleague who keeps the telescopes has allowed them to take two. With these, they observe some of the brightest stars. As soon as Jupiter is visible, they try to see the *jovial world*. Their interest is naturally a result of Galileo's condemnation by the Roman Catholic Church. Not only the Italian, Wolfgang's host explains, but Simon Marius from Nuremberg also had notes on the new worlds of Jupiter, for which he coined the names Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Meanwhile, Galileo observed the motion of these worlds around Jupiter. According to him, this is conclusive proof that the Earth is not the center of the universe around which everything revolves. The observation seemed to him a significant point in favor of Copernicus' hypothesis that the planets revolve around the sun. Smaller worlds would then revolve around the planets. Wolfgang thanks his host profusely for everything he had seen and heard during his two-week stay and continues his journey. After traveling

another ten Dutch miles, the young man arrives in Gorinchem. He spends the night at an inn. The next day he boards a river barge that will sail up the Merwe and then the Waal to the Rhine strands.

When he steps aboard, the boatswain tells him he doesn't know exactly how long it will take to cover the roughly 20 Dutch miles. That will depend on both the current and the wind. After all, they're sailing upstream, and the wind force is difficult to predict. Wolfgang quickly determines this. In two days, he covers no more than four miles because the easterly wind is too weak. The boat often has to anchor to avoid being carried back by the current. Yet, he prefers to stay aboard rather than cover the rest of the distance on foot. He has found a conversational companion. Heinrich is from Cologne and is traveling back home. At the first stop, they go ashore together and share the bread and fruit they have brought with them. Wolfgang recounts his conversations in Utrecht. Heinrich is particularly interested in what he's heard about Descartes. He explains to Wolfgang that the Reformation never had much impact on the predominantly Roman Catholic population of Cologne. Among the literate and well-read townspeople belonging to the clergy, Descartes is certainly not popular. He is portrayed as a Roman Catholic Christian with dangerous deviations. After all, in his *Meditationes de prima philosophia* he challenges transubstantiation. According to the dogmatic this is a direct attack on the Eucharist itself. Heinrich understands that Descartes, as always in this publication, attempts to separate faith from science. But for those who maintain that Aristotle's philosophy is the basis for science, everything Descartes

claims to be scientific is utter nonsense. Heinrich confides to Wolfgang that some discussions at the University of Cologne descend to the level of tavern squabbles. Descartes is simply slandered and abused. Heinrich adds that he is especially vilified by those who haven't read him. He even heard a dogmatics professor declare that he didn't even need to read Descartes to know he was mistaken. Wolfgang notes that among the Reformed it is primarily the Counter-Remonstrants who attack Descartes. The Calvinist Voetius is said to have even claimed that Descartes is a dangerous example of an atheist. Someone can only maintain something like this if they've either never read Descartes or can't follow his reasoning. Wolfgang discusses the points of contention between Descartes and Comenius regarding philosophy and theology. Here, he says, are two thinkers who know their thinking is incompatible, yet criticise each other without disparaging the other. And that seems to him a proper way to approach the matter. Heinrich then wonders whether doubt and dogma are compatible. Wolfgang finds this a good question to ponder. Meanwhile, he's pleased that his new friend suggests he stop in Cologne. He's happy to show him around.

At the end of the second day of the voyage, the boatswain announces that he intends to take advantage of the rising wind to sail a few more miles, and so they both return to the boat.

Heinrich asks Wolfgang if his trip to Frankfurt has a family or commercial purpose. Wolfgang explains that he's on a kind of orientation trip. He wants to become a teacher, like his father, perhaps a professor. He talks about the family's interest in the school and the education of village boys and girls, and the

children of farmhands and maids. He's mainly on an observation trip to see what education looks like in other places.
"A kind of pilgrimage?" asks Heinrich.
Possibly, but not with religious intent. Rather, with the intention of learning more about how someone can help themselves and others to learn.
"And have you already planned out where you want to go?"
"From Frankfurt I want to go to the Alpine region. I would like to visit a few places in the *Confederation of the 13 Cantons*. I want to stay in Basel for a while."
"Are you also looking for the non-Lutheran reformation?"
"Also. I'd like to gain some more insight into the differences between the reformers who broke with the Roman Catholic Church. I'm thinking of Jan Hus, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. Calvinists today don't have much sympathy for the Union of Bohemian Brethren. I want to know why. Perhaps that Union isn't dogmatic enough for them."
"You may know that these kinds of orientation trips gradually developed a kind of standard route."
"Yes, yes since Erasmus, Venice seems to be a kind of *Utopia*, or should I say a *Naitopia,* A place of well-being. But I'm looking for places where one can think and speak freely. I'm told this is the case in the Confederation. I want to see and hear it for myself, just as I want to see and hear for myself how schools operate in the Roman Catholic areas. The little schools are always poor I'm told. Yet in Amsterdam, people are talking a lot about Port-Royal and its exceptional *Little School*. I want to go and see it. I regret little remains of the Moorish schools of Al-

Andalus, because that would have taken me to Hispania. However, I'm told that it's difficult anywhere to find educators who consider knowledge a universal good for everyone.
School, science, and culture. I don't know what you heard about Frankfurt but I think Leipzig is gradually gaining importance as a cultural and literary center. As you know, the Counter-Reformation was rarely truly tolerant.
Hmm. I'd say the lack of tolerance isn't a hallmark of the Counter-Reformation. It's more likely the hallmark of anyone who thinks dogmatically. It's the same in Reformed circles, and perhaps in other philosophical or theological frameworks as well. But thanks for the information. I'll try to stop in Leipzig when I travel to Köthen.
Meanwhile, it has become completely dark and the boat is back at rest for the night near Emmerich. But it looks like the wind is favourable.

Finally, Cologne comes into view. Heinrich assures Wolfgang that his parents will welcome him. The two young men walk from the quay into the city toward St. Catherine's. Before the church, they cross the wide road and turn into one of the smaller streets leading to Heinrich's childhood home.
The Free Imperial City of Cologne, or *Colonia Agrippina as* many still say, it looks well-protected. Yet, Heinrich explains, Cologne has suffered indirect blows from the protracted conflicts of the last thirty years. Infant mortality is high due to the frequent periods of food shortages. *Universitas Studii Coloniensis* plays an important role in the life of the free city. But it is by no means the most excellent university in the German Empire. The

medical faculty, for example, experiences considerable difficulties with anatomy lessons. Dissecting human bodies is by no means a given these days, and the professors here can hardly replicate what Vesalius accomplished a hundred years earlier in both Padua and Basel. As a result, discussions about Vesalius versus Galenus often limit themselves to pointless and sometimes incorrect citations from books. Almost nothing is based on experimental approaches or observation thereof.
When Wolfgang asks Heinrich's family how the university deals with the various religious movements, he is told that the University of Rome has always remained loyal. Theology always has the final say and influences the other faculties. Wolfgang understands that knowledge is generally under dogmatic control. Heinrich's parents cautiously suggest that knowledge and research in the German Empire primarily develop in regions where discussion is less dogmatic and more rational. The University of Heidelberg, after losing its library, plundered by Rome, experienced the same decline as Cologne. Leipzig and Rostock currently seem attractive places to study. But for how long? It's difficult to say. His host family can't say much about the little schools.

The next day, Heinrich and Wolfgang go for a walk. Wolfgang quickly realizes he's wandering through a predominantly Roman Catholic area. Heinrich introduces him to Ludovicus, a highly respected teacher at the Latin school. Ludovicus explains that the lessons taught there are based on reading and the strictly predetermined interpretation of classical texts. He believes this is the best way to ensure that the young people develop the

right attitudes and thinking necessary to enter the university. Natural philosophy receives little attention.

Wolfgang quickly understands how, even during this friendly conversation, his questions about learning to reason in the vernacular are dismissed with some arrogance. Ludovicus claims to have read some writings by both Descartes and Comenius. He points out that it would disrupt the order of nature and human organisation too much if the reasoning of either of them were followed in the Latin School. In the minor school, such a thing would be even more dramatic.

Then Wolfgang brings up what he heard about the little school of Port-Royal. Ludovicus reminds him that the school is run by Antoine Singlin. He is almost certainly on the wrong track. Some admire his simple life as a priest, but no one should forget that he stubbornly continues the work of Hauranne. He was the previous abbot of Saint-Cyran, imprisoned by Richelieu at the time. And his imprisonment was certainly justified, Ludovicus believed. It's enough to recall Hauranne's heretical remarks regarding the Jesuits. And aside from the dark background, according to Ludovicus, of the protagonists of Port-Royal, he also addresses their meaning. Using the vernacular to reason about what is expressed in erudite Latin can quickly lead to misunderstandings. This is even the case with classical languages. All translators who translate from Koine and Hebrew into Latin know this very well. Just imagine what can happen if you translate into a volatile and therefore grammatically poorly organised vernacular. That simply encourages heresy, Ludovicus concludes. Wolfgang attempts to refute this argument. He

demonstrates that a work like the *Unlocked Door of Languages,* Richelieu was also interested in, precisely gives the correct interpretation of the nature of things, of people, and of divine work. Ludovicus shakes his head pityingly. Passing novelties of short duration, he claims. And moreover, such a thing turns established values on their head. Imagine if that language approach in the little school and the Latin school allowed more boys to go to university than just those chosen by the family or by God. One would simply stumble over literate and educated men. The abbeys would be too small to accommodate them all. And that would result in literate men who escaped any scrutiny. We really don't need new misguided men like that Italian Galileo. They force the Holy See to perform unpleasant actions to keep the faith pure. No, Ludovicus concludes, keep it simple. Let the sons of the nobles not destined for succession attend the Latin school and the university so they have a solid theological education. That is the spirit of the Council of Trent. And let those few young citizens chosen by God to be initiated into literature and languages by capable and devout teachers receive a solid Latin education.

Ludovicus then allows Wolfgang to visit a classroom. He finds young people who have almost completed their first year of Latin school and are studying Latin grammar according to the Jesuit model. In the classroom, ten-year-old Claus is poring over by the Latin School authorised Latin grammar book his father bought for him from the printer. Wolfgang asks if he can take a look at the model book. He notes that it is a classically printed work without a single illustration. Clearly, no consideration is

given to the age of those who will be using this book.
When they return home, he speaks about this. Heinrich's father explains to Wolfgang that he visited a class with children from the lower nobility who are required to prepare for a clergy position. Claus is perhaps a second or third son. Wolfgang reflects on the arrogance that stems from ownership and power, leading children to be viewed not as thinking beings but as instruments to manage family names. Only the firstborn son can benefit. Patriarchs not only in royal families use their absolute will to secure the family's power and property.

Three days later, Wolfgang bids farewell to Heinrich and his parents. He has about 40 Rhine miles ahead of him. That's the equivalent of 50 Dutch miles. The riverboat only goes as far as Königswinter. With some optimism, he thinks he can still reach Frankfurt in about a week. On the way, he wants to accept Abbot Franz Schaeffer's invitation to spend the night at Heisterbach Abbey. According to Wolfgang's father, Abbot Schaeffer is an example of gentleness, simplicity, humility, philanthropy, and charity. Wolfgang reflects on this as he continues up the Rhine towards Königswinter. He also reflects on the words of Ludovicus. His father and he have developed their thinking both in their native language and in erudite Latin. There *Unlocked Door of Languages* helped considerably. He also knows, of course, that most scholars and philosophers lacked that support. Many of the publishing natural philosophers were initiated into knowledge by preceptors in their younger years. Many are true masters. And what about the few boys chosen by God, as Ludovicus puts it? Would they have attained knowledge

and insight even without school? Or despite the Little School? What is the actual contradiction? Is it about religious reformation? Is it about the reformation of classes? Or is it about the reformation of the way teachers and *lecturers* acquire and pass on knowledge themselves? Are both Reformed and Roman Catholic religious orders concerned with the dissemination of knowledge, or are they primarily concerned with preserving their own privileges? Do humanists really want everyone to have more and better knowledge about things? Or are they primarily concerned with a kind of spiritual privilege that brought them closer to the truth? And what is truth? Is Ptolemy the truth? According to Regius' colleague, the one from the Smeetoren, Ptolemy himself is said to have said that he does not know what reality is but only tries to give a mathematical description of what he observes. And what if we observe that reality incorrectly? Is the *jovial world* real or is it an imagined reality? Is all reality imagined? Is there a connection between reality and truth? The questions arise suddenly and make Wolfgang's head spin. He uses the beautiful gift he received from a wealthy shipowner's son: a writing stylus of *plumbago* encased in wood. His friend had a shipment of such writing pens, which the English also call *lead pencil*, taken from an English ship captured by privateers. When he learned of Wolfgang's travel plans, he gave him two of these writing pens as a gift, along with an *album amicorum*. Wolfgang then joked that he was interested in acquiring knowledge, but he preferred to take notes himself. So it would be more like a *personalis album*. Still, his friend wrote a beautiful opening deed. And in

the meantime, he's set aside a few pages for signatures. The names of Regius, Ludovicus, and his host families are already on display here.

Wolfgang gets his *personal album* out of his travel bag. He blesses the comfort of the boat gliding over the water. He spends the rest of the afternoon carefully jotting down some of his thoughts. He couldn't do that in a carriage…

Königswinter comes into view, marking the end of the peaceful journey by water for now. Near the landing stage, he finds the inn, which also serves as a stop for the Tassis services. There, he learns it is possible to travel on to Koblenz or all the way to Mainz. As far as anyone knows, there's a boat connection from Mainz to Frankfurt. Although the carriage journey isn't cheap, he decides to ride the 22 Rhine miles to Mainz and then board the boat again for the final 6 Rhine miles to Frankfurt. He can leave in a day and a half. After securing his place in the carriage, he walks up the road to Heisterbach Abbey, a good half mile away. At the gate, he asks to be met by his father's correspondent. Some time later, Abbot Franz and Wolfgang sit at a small table, hands clasped, talking.

The abbot tells him about his connection with the Rhine region. He briefly mentions his stay in Georgenthal a few years before he was ordained abbot in Heisterbach. That was the only time he left his region. During that period, he heard about Ratke. He was interested in how language education could be approached. He never had any contact with Ratke himself. By chance, he began corresponding with Wolfgang's father, who wrote to the monastery with questions about the Cistercians. Schaeffer took

on the task of answering. The stylish use of Latin in the letter intrigued him, and he was surprised to learn that his correspondent was only fifteen years old. After his return to Heisterbach, the young man and the abbot continued to correspond, even today.

Abbot Franz now also praises Wolfgang for his fluency in Dutch, German, and Latin. The boy tells him that this may be due to the way he learned those languages, as well as English. He used the various translations of Comenius' *The Linguistic Door*. Wolfgang is surprised that the abbot is quite well-informed about Comenius' attempts at school reform. The abbot smilingly explains that although he believes Comenius is theologically mistaken, he can certainly be of great service in organising the education of illiterate children.

The abbot's frank manner in which he addresses the young man later prompts Wolfgang to pose a rather pointed question. He wants to know how such a humane, philanthropic, and gentle person as Franz can be the abbot of a monastery belonging to an order known for its history of crusades, the Inquisition, and the bloody suppression of dissenting believers. The abbot is silent for a moment and then says that an order is not only a brotherhood but also an organisation with a history. Is Wolfgang familiar with the fact that the Rule of Citeaux or Cistercium was an attempt to restore order to the spiritual life in abbeys that no longer observed the Rule of Benedict. Unfortunately, the quest for purity is no easy task. Convincing others of the benefits of a pure, simple, and pious life quickly takes on forms of intolerance. How much patience can one have while waiting for

others to gain the same insight as oneself? Isn't that the tragedy of humankind? Aren't weak teachers victims of their own impatience and lack of knowledge? Now that more and more people can read, it's difficult to compare the current period with the period when Robert de Molesme founded the order with a few monks. It seems like a recurring pattern. Regularly, there are monks or priests who, perhaps as a result of strict dietary rules that promote visions, wonder if the Church isn't becoming too opulent. The displayed wealth is a painful matter. And then there's the way church leaders impose rules that their successors then ignore. That's confusing. Furthermore, there are the devout purists who want to propagate their own vow of poverty and simplicity. If necessary, by force. The Roman Catholic Church granted refuge to some of them, exiled others. But all fervently proclaim their own truth. Their own truth, not reality. That fervent proclamation all too easily turns into violence. At this moment, we very much hope for a swift end to the destruction and massacres that have plagued our region for decades. The end will unfortunately be more likely to be due to a lack of money or soldiers, rather than a sudden, greater understanding of the futility of the havoc people themselves cause. And look, as abbot in that order you noted that was intolerant, I only tried to keep our parishes in the region occupied by our own genuine monks. I succeeded quite well. That required goodwill more than weapons. I sent out monks who were not arrogant, but understanding and open to dialogue. Simple people, which doesn't mean they were poor wretches before they became monks, the abbot concludes.

“Simple people… The leading clergy, on the other hand, often come from the worldly nobility, don’t they?” asks Wolfgang.
From the secular nobility or from families with considerable wealth, yes, that’s usually the case. Families who don’t want their sons and daughters to be poor and see celibacy as a way to prevent the family estate from crumbling.
“And are those sons forced into the clergy expected to accept the vow of poverty and simplicity?”
“You’re asking difficult questions, my child. It’s not just about property. It’s also about influence. Families gain influence over reigning princes and kings when one of their clergy sons becomes an advisor or secretary.”
“But isn’t the urge for possession and territorial expansion something that nobility and clergy have in common?”
“Well. It’s not always easy. Our abbey, for example, relies on the work of many villagers and lay brothers for its maintenance. The latter have fewer spiritual duties than the monks themselves, but they do fulfil a significant function, which even allows them to exercise a certain power over ourselves.”
That same evening Wolfgang takes leave of the abbot.

The next morning Wolfgang gives in to the impulse to attend the *prime*. He is moved by the Gregorian chant. Then he walks into the abbey fields, having a few brief conversations with those working there. He even meets a Flemish farmworker from Antwerp. They discover that they understand each other quite well, speaking the Dutch of Amsterdam and the Flemish of Antwerp. Together they share bread and water, after which they pick some fruit from the orchard. Shortly before noon, Wolfgang

says goodbye and descends into the town. Near the inn where he booked his place in the carriage, he waits for the other travellers and the vehicle. His next destination is Koblenz, less than 10 Prussian miles away. They arrive late in the evening, just before full dark. After a night at the inn where the coachman changes the horses, he has just enough time to see the mouth of the Moselle.

After a lot of shaking, they arrive in Mainz. Wolfgang decides to spend another night at the inn that serves as their stop. After some asking around and searching, he finds the landing place for the market boat that can take him to Frankfurt.

The ship departs at sunrise. He finds a seat among fellow passengers and goods wrapped in linen sheets. For a while, he watches the horsemen deftly guiding the animals along the towpath. Then he bends his knees and takes up his *personal album* to update it. He hasn't been able to do that the last two days in the carriage, and yesterday he was too tired and shaken up to write by the light of the oil lamp.

After summarising the conversation with Abbot Franz Schaeffer, he also writes a short note about Mainz. The city looks severely damaged by the long war. Philipp von Schönberg has just been appointed archbishop. He heard this news yesterday at the inn where he struck up a conversation with Martin Scharff, a young schoolmaster. Martin also told him how school buildings are being repaired throughout Mainz. A persistent rumor is circulating that sufficient school space is needed to send all the city's children to the little school. Wolfgang briefly discusses the purpose of his trip and asks the schoolmaster how he can reach

him later by letter to learn about the development of the school plan.

In the afternoon Wolfgang arrives at the *Fahrtor* of Frankfurt. His heart pounds as he walks into the city on his way to his cousins' house.

Frankfurt and the Alps

Dear all,

Time flies. I've been living with our cousin Leopold and his lovely wife Magda for almost six months now. Leopold's bookstore is doing well. As I told you, he's significantly expanded his printing business. Today, he has six printers permanently employed. Book sales are also going well. Magda and Leopold spend a lot of time satisfying the demand for specific books. They correspond with colleagues, and not only in the German Empire. You could safely say that you feel the wind blowing here from the Mediterranean to Stockholm, and from London to Moskovia.

I hope you received my February letter. I haven't received a reply yet. I did receive one to my December letter, which I responded to in my previous letter. I'm told that shipping on the Rhine wasn't interrupted during the ongoing peace negotiations, but that there are sometimes skirmishes at the tollhouses and land borders over who is transporting which goods from one side to the other. This may be related to some French garrisons who, according to what we're told here, continue to guard the border regions. Letters that aren't goods are always delivered unless, of course, something happens to the bearer. Well.

You can imagine the great relief here now that peace between the Republic and the Kingdom of Spain has become a reality. Everyone hopes that the Republic's trade with the New World will also

promote trade relations with the Free Imperial Cities along the Rhine. Here in Frankfurt, the printers are certainly very pleased with the increasing demand. Leopold explained me that printing the works of professors at universities administered by the Roman Catholics brings a great deal of uncertainty. It is not uncommon for already printed, unpaid works to end up on the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The peace makes it easier to accept works not bound by Roman Catholic regulations. Moreover, it is now easier to ship unsold works that are already on the Index to Leipzig or Amsterdam. In those cities, I'm told, sometimes the fact that a work is on the Index is enough to make it more valuable. Strange, isn't it? There is who attaches more value to the fact that the Church Authorities in Rome banned a work than to the thoughts expressed by the author of the work.

Meanwhile, I consider myself a live-in preceptor for Leopold and Magda's two children. Johannes is very inquisitive and wants to know everything about the workings of nature. A few days ago, a pigeon flew to its death against the wall of the courtyard here at home. With Leopold's permission we dissected the dead animal. You should have seen the boy with his Vesalius pose. He and I made drawings based on his observations of the position of the inner organs. Now I'm looking for a freshly slaughtered rabbit. That way, he can draw the difference between a flying animal and a walking one. Their younger brother, Martin, is a good reader. I was very happy to find a Middle German version of Janua Linguarium from a colleague of Leopold's. I also have plenty of books and texts to choose from to prepare Johannes and Martin for the academy.

Dear parents, there are persistent rumours circulating here the new peace treaties will be concluded in Münster before the end of the year. I'll wait and see. I promised Leopold that I'll stay in Frankfurt at least until Johannes starts at the academy. As you know, I then

plan to travel on to Basel. I'd rather wait a bit longer because I've heard from our correspondents at the University of Basel there are still considerable tensions on Lake Constance. I also learned that Johann Wettstein, mayor of Basel, is currently on a diplomatic trip to Münster. Let's be optimistic.
May God forgive those who, yearning for possessions and power, use His name in vain to justify massacres and worldly conflicts. That is the idea with which I conclude this letter.

Wolfgang rereads his letter before folding and sealing it. As always, he might have worded some of the things differently. He still hesitates whether or not to encourage his father in his desire to leave Amsterdam and come to Frankfurt. While it is a free city and the population is tolerant regarding religious aspects, it remains a rather small place. Mainz might be a better place to live if his father would try to continue his professorship. Frankfurt is not far away and there is a good boat connection. On the other hand a flourishing printing industry and related trades could easily create a false impression. Education in this region is in the hands of the Jesuits. Wolfgang suspects that his father wouldn't even have a chance as a teacher at the Latin School.

A few months later the time has come. *Instrumentum Pacis Monasteriensis* confirms the end of the wars between the Holy Roman Emperor and the French King and their supporters. At the same time *Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis* is signed, which means the end of the hostilities between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Swedish royal house. For the Republic, this treaty means new protection against the claims of the House of

Habsburg. The *Confederation of the 13 Cantons* can now consider itself truly independent, both from the German Empire and from any French claims.

All in all, the local princes, dukes, and lords weakened the power of the German Emperor with these treaties. The empire now consists of 350 independent states and France and Sweden get the right to vote in the *Perpetual Diets*.

On paper, religious tolerance is guaranteed. Calvinism is accepted as a faith. Leopold and Wolfgang have their own thoughts on all this. After all, there is a significant difference between the Catholic emperor's promised tolerance for the Lutheran princes and actual tolerance among the various religious communities of the city's population. Furthermore, in practice, the ruler of each state of the German Empire imposes one of the three faiths on its inhabitants, as the only one permitted in their territory. Unless the free imperial cities opt for a cautiously more tolerant policy, many families who wish to maintain their own religion will once again have to leave, packing their bags and moving to another region. Leopold ironizes that clandestine churches like the Remonstrant one in Amsterdam, which Wolfgang recently mentioned, might have a long lifespan. These kinds of half-hearted solutions devised by the princes are dangerous. They are primarily the result of the nobles' ignorance of the reality of the local population. No one seems to understand that without a solid secular education, tolerance will be hard to come by. The cousins are in complete agreement on that.

Although both see as positive the *de jure* recognition of the

Republic and the Confederation of XIII Cantons, they cannot help but be very critical of both treaties. The Lords have once again simply arranged who will levy taxes on which cities, urban and rural populations. And that population suddenly finds itself faced with new borders. The French royal house now rules over Pinerolo and also over the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun. Alsace becomes the property of the Austrian Habsburg House, but not Strasbourg and Mulhouse. The Swedish royal house, in turn, takes over parts of the north of the German Empire, thus confirming the influence of the deceased Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus.

Winter is approaching. Wolfgang has agreed with Leopold that he will continue his journey as soon as spring arrives. He has stayed in Frankfurt longer than he had anticipated. And although the marketplace and the printing shop continue to expand Wolfgang's contact list, he wants to continue on to Basel. He will have to make the journey of approximately 60 Rhineland miles mainly by carriage. His Basel correspondent has mapped out a route that will regularly bring him to the riverbank by the end of the day, but with the necessary realism, he is preparing for ten to twelve days of carriage travel. The peace treaties will have a favourable effect on river traffic. But perhaps the peace is still too recent to be able to count on regular boat connections in places where locks are essential but not available for the moment. This, in turn, means walking between various landing stages, without the certainty of finding a boat again upstream. If one is to believe the Lords who obtained water rights with the *Instrumentum Pacis*

Monasteriensis, that will soon change. They are allowed to build toll houses on the sections of the river they own, and so they want to improve the navigability of the Rhine. But for now, it will be a carriage ride to Basel from Mainz. Johannes will accompany him to the city. The boy will spend a few days with a host family who were able to care for him, and who will accommodate him while he attends lectures at the Jesuit-run *Domus Universitatis*.

A few days before his departure, Wolfgang receives a long letter from Amsterdam.

Dear Wolfgang,

Apparently, we can face the next twenty years a little more calmly. The kings and princes no longer have the money to wage war, and that at least saves lives. How good would it be if we could also end pestis *with a treaty. We are glad to see that your letters don't mention diseases. It's different here at the moment. The bird doctor is back in town. We had a visit from a brother who told us what life is like in those parts of Amsterdam we never visit ourselves. The people live like animals. They spend the winter in stables and cages. They spend the summer mainly outdoors. In those neighbourhoods, there are regular minor plagues and other diseases. We ourselves are not as anxious as we were that year when Alderman Laurens Reael was struck by the plague. We hadn't been in the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands for very long then. You were seven, and we were very afraid that fate would also knock on our door. People often say that* pestis *is a disease of the poor and of those who associate with them. That reminds me that*

even if a treaty were possible, it wouldn't be signed. No one makes treaties about the lives of the poor, not even here in the Republic. That much is clear to me now. But our visitor also told us about the lives of the craftsmen. They generally earn less than a third of our income. Others have much less. The sailor who works hard in the herring fishery can count on no more than 140 guilders a year and some herring. The annual pay of ordinary soldiers is just under 100 guilders. What else is left for these people but to steal and cheat if they aren't encouraged to be moral through education? But would education still make them accept such starvation wages?

Our expenses are more modest than those of other professors and dignitaries. Yet, our income is now slightly more than double what a Latin School instructor earns. In any case, we have been granted a lifestyle that a large part of the Dutch population would describe as opulent.

We certainly cannot complain, even now the city administration has officially granted us the status of semi-capitalists *when collecting contributions. We maintain our habit of eating good but frugal meals. We still alternate vegetables, meat, fish, and fruit as much as possible. Meals… our visitor also painted a bleak picture of what usually appears on the table of the poor. Porridge made with rye flour and water, rye bread, and diluted beer. Sometimes some stockfish, bacon, or home-grown vegetables.*

Wolfgang, what has made us tremble most of all are the slowly trickling reports of thirty years of war. We hear the most horrific things from our visitor. He tells us about corpse eaters during the final years of the war. Yes. He heard from Lutherans from the north

of the Republic, who have trade relations with Hamburg citizens, that, after yet another siege, emaciated survivors driven by poverty and desperation were forced to consume human flesh. How horrific those stories are. I hope our good master Ian Amos, who still resides in Pomerania, is unaware of them.

And now? The war is over here for the time being, but not the worries. The Stadtholder is doing everything he can to maintain his expensive mercenary army costing a fortune. The regents of Staats-Vlaanderen, Staats-Brabant, and Zeeland are sympathetic to his renewed desire to incorporate Antwerp and Ghent but here in Holland they reject competing ports and trading centres within the Republic. Here, merchants prefer to keep competing market towns outside the borders. They can be better controlled by levying tolls on the waterways. And there are reasons for this. Trade with both the East Indies and the West Indies is increasingly benefiting Dutch merchants. The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Nederlandsche Octroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie) and the West India Company (Vereenigde Nederlandsche Octroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie) have largely taken over the routes of Portuguese and Spanish navigators, and the English monarch, in turn, is making a fuss about this.

The trade to the West Indies is in turmoil now that the Ducal House of Bragança is attacking the Habsburg authority in Portugal. This is because this new potential ruler of Portugal is also staking his claim to the colonies that, according to him, were not sufficiently protected by the Habsburg House and were therefore falling into the hands of the regents of the Republic.

Today, we have hard evidence that Dutch traders engaged in the

slave trade. The Chartered Dutch West India Company took over towns and factories from the Portuguese and, until recently, traded from the Loango coast and São Felipe de Benguela. According to one of our sources here, it wasn't so much Portuguese pressure, but rather the low profit margins that led them to largely abandon West Africa. This, in turn, is a good thing for the Chartered Dutch East India Company, by increasing its influence in the East Indies. Still according to our source, the new Portuguese rulers are now concentrating primarily on Brazil, and their priority is securing a sufficient labour force, brought in as slaves from West Africa, including by traders of the Dutch Company.

We hope this letter reaches you before you leave for Basel. If you have already left, your cousins will forward it to you. In Basel, please immediately visit our good friend who was kind enough to host you. In his last letter, he assured us once again that he eagerly awaits your arrival. You will find in him a guide who will surely help you with your questions about God experience, nature, upbringing, and education. You will find in him an openness that is rare in these times, when everyone is not only licking their wounds as a result of the conflicts that have destroyed life, health, or spirit, but when intolerance still rears its ugly head.
We eagerly await your next shipments in which you will tell us about your teachings.

After eleven days of shuddering in the carriage, Wolfgang finally sees Basel looming in the distance. The journey was long, but not particularly difficult. He was forced to sleep in the open air for only one night, along with the three other travellers and the coachman. The landscape has changed over the last few

miles. Although the Rhine flows through both cities, Basel is 547 feet higher than Mainz. On the horizon, snow-capped peaks testify to their location in even higher regions. There lie the mountain passes leading to the Duchy of Milan and the Republic of Venice. Wolfgang sighs. Milan and Venice seem so close. But he has no vocation as a painter, and so he has no desire whatsoever for a difficult journey through passes and mountains. Bologna or Rome would be rather the destinations for a teacher. But to reach Bologna, there's a boat. One sails along the Mediterranean coast to Genoa, then heads into the Po Valley. And the journey to Rome can also be made by boat, although the Mediterranean can be treacherous. And those distant mountains already give him a queasy feeling. He'll stay on this side of the Alps and visit Paris after Basel, as he'd already planned.

He noticed that the neutrality of most cantons during the wars between Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists allowed the population to build a relatively stable life. He learns that there are attempts to allow only one religion in each canton, and that this can vary from canton to canton. Yet, he is told, there is considerable tolerance, at least within the entire Christian family. By association, people value those who think differently much less. Jews, in particular, are struggling, even more so than Muslims. He must discuss this with his host, Jacobus Schulthess.

"Did you find everything you needed in your room?" asks Jacobus.

Wolfgang had freshened up and now they were sitting together enjoying a simple dinner.

“Yes, I am very grateful to you, not only for the way you received me, but also for the way my belongings, which my father sent ahead, were treated.”
Wolfgang looks straight into the man’s bright blue eyes. Jacobus is a tall, slightly greying figure with an expressive face full of lines that easily unfold into a broad smile.
“I’m glad to have the son of my old friend from Köthen visiting me here. Is he really doing as well as he suggests in his letters?”
“He’s a bit worried about his future old age. His father has always loved living in Amsterdam, and his mother also enjoys it. Nevertheless, he’s considering returning to the German Empire.
“To Köthen?” Jacobus wonders.
“No, not to Köthen. He often talks about Frankfurt. My great-uncle has spoken to him about this several times.”
“That’s why you stayed in that area for so long?” Jacobus says in a questioning tone.
“Not really, but a little bit. Everyone advised me to wait until the Münster negotiations ended with a signed treaty before traveling further. And since the broader peace guarantee didn’t arrive until just before winter, I stayed with the family until spring to make the journey here easier. I did, however, gain a lot of experience as a tutor for my cousin’s children.”
“And in the meantime you looked around at your father’s request?”
“Father would like to publish his thoughts and experiences as a teacher and professor. He always approached the *studia humanitatis* according to the ideas of Ratke and Comenius. His great-uncle is willing to print and publish his work. He is willing

to bear the investment. In exchange, he proposes that father become preceptor to all his grandchildren. The annual salary that great-uncle proposes for this is considerably lower than what he is currently earning in Amsterdam. But housing is assured."

"And perhaps he'll have a hard time finding work elsewhere in the Frankfurt area. Even Mainz…"

"Yes, that's what I understood, both from my cousin and from a young teacher I met in Mainz. Apparently, teachers are excluded if they aren't devout Roman Catholics."

"The newly signed treaties are not necessarily a gateway to better understanding between the various Christian groups," sighs Jacobus. "It appears so, but ultimately, the ruler of each territory determines which church is the only permitted one. So each movement tries to gain as much influence as possible. Rome undeniably has more resources than anyone else. The Society of the Jesuits also plays a major role. Many of its members are recognised scholars. Thanks to them, excellent universities, *Athenea* and Latin schools are and will remain completely Roman Catholic."

"I initially thought this was mainly the case in the German Empire. That area consists of a hopelessly large number of principalities, prince-bishoprics, duchies, and kingdoms. They also have to take the free cities into account. But ultimately, even in Amsterdam, held up by the Republic as an example of openness, quite a few clandestine churches were established. Perhaps Father should consider coming to Basel?" Wolfgang concludes questioningly.

Jacobus' face breaks into a smile. "Not everything here is as people elsewhere think. Although, under various Christian denominations, we live better than in the Republic. Until today, anyway."
"I'd like to hear from you about that. Ultimately, the recent history of Basel itself is not unimportant in the area of theological dispute."
"I'd be happy to tell you about it. Take a look around, including in my library. In about ten days, there will be a period when my students won't need me. We'll talk more then."

The days take on a fixed pattern. In the morning, Wolfgang heads into town. After being introduced by Jacobus, he's given the opportunity to attend lectures at the university as a guest during the morning hours. At the end of the morning, he sets out to explore. For example, during one of his walks, he visits a school for the poor. Here too, he notices the stark contrast between this little school and the programs offered to children of wealthy citizens.
After lunch, he usually retreats to his host's rather large library. He reads texts by Petrarch and Dante. He finds annotated versions of publications by most of the Reformers with a critical view of the Church. He rereads with great pleasure the *Praise of Folly*. He is delving into an original version of *Utopia* by Thomas More. A collection of texts by François de La Mothe Le Vayer, including ""*De la liberté et de la servitude*" and "*Discours sur l'histoire*" makes him think a lot.

"Wolfgang, I have all the time in the world for you now. I'd be

happy to hear your questions and, afterward, your comments on my attempts to formulate answers where possible," Jacobus begins a long conversation shortly after breakfast.

"I try to imagine how we can provide an education that, if not cosmopolitanism, at least leads to tolerance. In Erasmus I perhaps find a connection between humanist and cosmopolitan. But isn't the humanist simply someone who engages with the *studia humanitatis* are you concerned with?"

"If you stick with Petrarch, you can say that it is simply about the *studia humanitatis*, I would say. He's talking about the humanist who not only studies Latin and Greek language, literature, and culture, but also teaches about them. However, I wouldn't here use the adverb "simply". Petrarch worked and wrote 300 years ago. He lived in a time when it became clear to researching scholars that the texts of the ancient philosophers translated into Latin were generally not read or placed in their context. Moreover these scholars often observed that different translations not only led to different interpretations but that a translation itself was often a specific interpretation.

"A kind of misuse of other people's writings. Almost like François de La Mothe Le Vayer writes…"

"Oh, you've obviously done some serious digging in my library. Yes, perhaps. But I think that for the first humanists it was mainly a reaction resulting from their own doubts about the accuracy of the translated texts. Of course, they were aware of how Cicero used the word *humanitas* for civilization, culture and education."

"Does this interest in ancient texts and the way they are

interpreted have to do with the fact that more people learned to read?"

Not quite. Don't forget that we're talking about a period when printing was still rather rare in Europe. The growing number of readers has a lot to do with the lower prices of books, and that only happened well after the introduction of setting texts with movable metal types, as your family in Frankfurt did. I think the growing interest has to do with the greater curiosity of scholars as they searched for ancient texts, which they often only read in translated form. And I think they noticed the deplorable conditions prevailing in many places where copying was done, including abbey libraries. As you may know, the higher clergy often descended from noble families. They tend to disregard the rules they invent for themselves and others afterward. Anyone who compares manuscripts of translations and finds irregularities between versions will attribute those deviations to a lack of adherence to rules and conventions, I think. I think the authors of Petrarch's time wanted to better understand their spiritual brothers from earlier times. And that's probably what caring theologians today also want."

"And the Church leadership, which had more on its mind, did not intervene to restore some order…"

"Don't forget that the nobles and reigning princes wield considerable control over the Church, as familial ties often exist between secular and ecclesiastical leadership. But the Church, in turn, wields considerable influence over secular power. And that makes the Church of Rome a player instead of the mediator it claims to be. This has been the case for a long time now.

Consider the hostile relationship between Pope Pius V and Elizabeth of England, who herself was no pushover. By the time Petrarch died, for the second or third time in its history, the Church leadership was so tainted by simony and family interests that the floodgates opened once again. The quarrelling princes and prelates were so at odds that there were two popes constantly working one against the other. In practice, it boiled down to reigning princely families trying to force their own popes into power in order to obtain both secular and ecclesiastical privileges. This sad spectacle was grist to the mill of the reformers.

Jan Hus was born in Bohemia in 1370. Apart from the Italian and other literates who were interested in the Ciceronian *humanitas h*e began his university studies and, fifteen years after Petrarch's death, he received the title of Doctor of Letters. Six years later he was Rector Magnificus of the University of Prague. Around the turn of the 15th century, church leadership had become so degraded that each of the popes openly negotiated offices and favours. At the same time, corruption and the trade in indulgences and relics flourished. Hus had translated Wycliffe during his studies. Wycliffe openly opposed to a pope with great worldly power subjugating princes. He called that kind of pope the Antichrist. Wycliffe also rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, which immediately caused much suspicion among church leaders. Hus did not follow Wycliffe on the latter point, but he did publicly speak out against simony, corruption, and the trade in indulgences and relics."

"So basically Hus just said out loud what everyone could see

and what many knew was true."

"Yes, Hus denounced the arrogance of power in the Church. But he did so at 'the worst moment'. For almost his entire life, there were always two popes. Each represented a power bloc. The two blocs were nothing more than the two hostile camps among the ruling Royal Houses on the European continent. To complicate matters further, there was also a debate at that time between two movements within the church leadership itself. According to one group, the pope and the curia wielded all power, while according to the other, the ecumenical council stand above the pope. At the Council of Constance, the Council adopters gained the upper hand, but not for long. You could argue that by the time of the Council of Trent, the power of the pope was once again absolute. The desired Counter-Reformation was the argument for giving the pope that power."

"But why did Hus have to die?"

"A brutal setback, I'd say. By the time Hus is convicted, the two-pope farce will have become a three-pope farce. The third pope, from Bologna, anathematises Jan Hus. In fact, Hus is the victim of a papal plot because, as you said earlier, he expresses what everyone knows.

Meanwhile, the German Emperor Sigismund forces the Council of Constance, demanding that it set things right regarding the papacy. This council would last four years. He grants Hus safe conduct, allowing him to present his theses on the spot. As soon as the second antipope arrives in Constance, he has Hus imprisoned. The Bohemian rector is interrogated and convicted over the next year. Ironically, Hus' conviction is the only

unanimous decision of the arrogant negotiating parties. *Let's kill that troublemaker first and we'll see what happens next*". They seem to say. Sigismund never intervened, not even when the Council sent Jan Hus to the stake."

"And with this condemnation the warring parties show their first sign of unanimity."

"You could say so, yes. The Council is still dragging on for three years. A sort of conciliatory unity pope will emerge, but what's agreed upon will never truly take effect. That's why new voices are quickly rising against what has never been truly addressed by arrogant church leaders who, above all, don't want to weaken their power."

"And Hus just gets burned?"

"Yes. There was another attempt by 250 Bohemian nobles to save Hus' life by pleading with the emperor. But nothing was done. There's even a story going around that when Hus was led to the stake, he looked Sigismund, who was present, straight in the eye. The Emperor promptly blushed bright red. The episode of the plea was the direct cause of lasting disagreement between the Bohemian nobles and the German Emperor, even today."

"Comenius' work also testifies to the tension between the German Emperor and Bohemia."

"It could hardly be otherwise. As you know, Comenius is the bishop of the Moravian Brethren. This brotherhood was formed some forty years after Jan Hus' death. They largely adopted his teachings and preached poverty and nonviolence. Nowadays, the idea of poverty has disappeared from their proposals. Meanwhile, you certainly can't call Hus a cosmopolitan, and I

doubt you can count him among the humanists. However, like the humanists, he did advocate for writing and thinking in the vernacular, like Dante or Petrarch before him."

"But both you and my father consider Comenius a Christian humanist."

"Comenius is today, Hus is almost 300 years back in time. I think Comenius is a cosmopolitan in spite of himself. Like your father's generation, like many philosophers since the time of Jan Hus, he is a traveller. Not necessarily because he wants to. Often, like many others, he is forced by circumstances to settle elsewhere."

"He does argue against war violence."

"I'd like to speak to him about this myself. He certainly doesn't advocate violence. Yet he constantly seeks support for the Czech cause. And he certainly knows that this support also involves armed violence."

"Can one stand for nonviolence and watch how violent people abuse and kill people you love?"

"That's an age-old ethical problem, of course. Turning the other cheek isn't at all a natural attitude for someone seeking revenge, and it's difficult to maintain for someone seeking justice that guarantees peaceful coexistence among people who differ in their thinking. Turning the other cheek isn't the same as embracing the other cheek despite mutual differences."

"And that is as Erasmus envisioned it?"

"I think Erasmus was a Christian who advocated good relations between Christians. And he did so with a cosmopolitan outlook. Doesn't he say, *'The Englishman is an enemy of the Frenchman simply because he is French; the Briton hates the Scot simply*

because he is Scot; the German stands with drawn knives against the Frenchman; the Spaniard against both one and the other. What depravity! It is said that he wrote *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* having in mind his correspondent, the arms dealer Hans Poppenruyter. Erasmus also tackles the soulless rituals and counterposes them with a religion that addresses God directly. This perhaps made him popular among the reformers. He views humanity from a Christian perspective. In doing so, he certainly addresses what he considers to be wrong church practices. He also addresses the secular interpretation of church practices, but he does not consider religion itself."

"And according to you, that is what the reformers do?"

"I would argue that there is a fundamental difference in the image of God, and in the interpretation of the relationship between man and his God, when you read Erasmus or Luther. The texts *On free will* in *On the Enslaved Will* are, in my opinion, emblematic.

Calvin adopts Erasmus' position that human existence is determined by knowledge of God and knowledge of oneself. But he also agrees with Luther that God determines everything: whatever you do, it is always God's will."

"If you will allow me to summarise what I think I have understood from what I read and what you are now telling me," Wolfgang begins, "then the timeline is roughly as follows. About 300 years ago, literates or scholars studied ancient texts and interpreted them in the context of the author. Those literates are considered *humanists*. Two generations later, Jan Hus spoke out loud what many people thought about the arrogant opulence of

church leaders colluding with secular leaders. He was murdered for this.

Some four or five generations later, Martin Luther announced his theses. It is clear that he admired the clear language with which Hus denounced the abuses of church leadership and that he also resolutely condemned the trade in indulgences and images. Zwingli, in turn, announced his theses in 1522. He condemned indulgences, mercenaries, and celibacy and stated that the imposition of fasting was a human, not a divine, rule. He even supposedly said that less fasting would lead to fewer visions and less mysticism. Meanwhile, Calvin studied Greek to be able to read the New Testament in its 'original language' and to produce what he considered a correct translation. In Basel, he met Oecolampadius, who was working with Erasmus on the new Greek edition of the New Testament. Calvin stated, among other things, that the Holy Scripture *is true in itself* and also that people cannot undo God's will. Shortly after Calvin gained more support about a hundred years ago, the Roman Catholic Church organised the Council of Trent. Among the various decrees, the rule from then on was that to become a bishop, one must have studied theology. We can see this as a new attempt to tackle simony and nepotism, but also to have more good theologians within the Roman Catholic Church."

"That doesn't seem to me a bad summary of the tensions in the Christian world.

Another interesting phenomenon is that about a hundred years ago the word *humanist* gives rise to the new word *inhumane* that Montaigne uses in his essays. He uses the word to define

the circus games of ancient Rome, but also the barbaric way in which the Jews were deported from Portugal."
"That would mean that *humane* is regarding mankind and *inhumane* is what is barbarism?"
"You could see it that way, yes. A social dimension appears to the word humanist.
Regardless, the literate humanists are generally more cosmopolitan and pacifist, as we've already noted. Some of them served their prince, king, or emperor. Thomas More served Henry Tudor of England, and Erasmus served Emperor Charles V. Perhaps the latter even leave a trace…"
"What do you mean by this?"
"There is a story going around that when some religious leaders asked Emperor Charles to have Luther burned at the stake, he is said to have replied that he did not want to blush like Sigismund."

Some time after their conversation about religion and its reformation, Wolfgang asks Jacobus if they can discuss the influence of humanists on education. Jacobus readily agrees.
"I suspect you will steer our conversation towards Comenius again."
Wolfgang looks a little shy. "It's quite noticeable that my father and I have such a great admiration for Ian Amos, isn't it?"
"It is not at all bad to admire a figure like Comenius. And you are certainly not alone. Since his *Janua Linguarum Reserata* he was praised in many circles. Ultimately, this work is an instrument of our time. It supports language education. This is no longer just the old trivium as the first step of the *artes liberales*."

“Did the humanists oppose scholasticism from the beginning?”
“In my opinion, the humanists are mainly opposed to the often dogmatic nature of scholasticism. Much has to do with the, in their view, inadequate knowledge of the classical languages. For example, Erasmus closely follows the founding of the *Collegium trium linguarum* of *College der Dry Tonghen* in Leuven. This college inspired Guillaume Budé to establish what became known as the *College Royal*. In Oxford the *Corpus Christi College* starts, in London a few years before the *St Pauls College* was established. These are exclusive schools with a new approach to language study. Science follows. Gradually, it becomes more oriented towards personal observation and not just by studying the ancient philosophers.”
“Exclusive schools?”
“Yes. The principles that led to these schools to question scholasticism and the lack of free thinking. But the schools themselves are clearly intended for a very small segment of the population: boys of good descent, often come from noble backgrounds.”
“Do the humanists not pay attention to village schools and little schools?”
“It’s difficult to get a precise picture of this. We know that Erasmus says that children should be raised from birth to virtue and literacy in a spirit of freedom. I don’t know if he’s talking about all children here. He also opposes corporal punishment. He says in a witticism that it’s easier for one person to restrict the freedom of many by instilling fear in them than for one person to be raised in freedom. And he also says that whoever oppresses the people

using fear is a tyrant, but whoever directs the people in their duty to kindness, moderation, and wisdom is a king. These seem to me to be hints to the ruling class and the education that class should strive for its children."

"So his criticism is more about how some are educated and not about how many are excluded from education?"

"I think so, yes. They are wealthy literates who are working on better education, primarily aimed at the children of wealthy literates. Rabelais, for example, writes about religious dogmatism in education. You can't tell from his words whether he's also criticising the fact that education and training are denied to many. In the spirit of the times, you probably couldn't expect greater clarity."

"But humanists today pay more attention to technical aspects of the *artes liberales*? They don't just see the *studia humanitatis* as an extension of the *trivium*, but also as a more experimental approach to broadening the knowledge of the *quadrivium*. And if so, wouldn't that be beneficial for more children than just those from wealthy families?"

"Here comes the admirer of Comenius. Ian Amos is a Christian humanist, just like Erasmus. Incidentally, Descartes is a humanist and rational. But Comenius has a different character. He sees children as independent beings who can be guided in their thinking. And education must be adapted to that. He talks not only about the art of teaching, but also about the art of learning."

"And is that so? Are children, from an early age, self-thinking beings?"

"This could be an interesting field of research for you. For you or

later for your children. I recently heard from a colleague of *Westminster School* that he had among his disciples a *Kings' Scholar* who might still surprise us about education and upbringing. I asked him for the boy's name."

"Will you let me know when you hear his name? Perhaps I can learn something from him."

"Perhaps. But I think your concern for making Knowledge accessible to everyone has more to do with how leaders view the world, and less to do with how they view the school. The school is one part of a much larger whole."

"I'm afraid I can't quite follow you."

"Look, the slogan of the Hus followers, among whom the Moravian Brethren is *Veritas Vincit*, the truth will prevail. But what is the truth? Is there such a thing as a *victorious* truth? In scholasticism, it certainly exists. And if someone has a more inquisitive mind? Isn't truth rather the interplay of doubts and attempts at searching? What is the truth of nature, what is the truth in human action? What do I hear in Erasmus' words when he speaks of the hostilities between the French and the English, between the Germans and the French, between the Spaniards and the inhabitants of Belgium Fœderatum? A truth or an observation? How does a cosmopolitan observes historical truth? The evolution of ethical and religious positions?"

"You're talking about dogmatic thinking? Can someone discuss their own dogma with others in a non-dogmatic way?"

"I'd say yes, as long as someone doesn't interpret their own literacy dogmatically. May I suggest you to delve a little deeper into the writings of François de la Motte La Vayer? I'll get you an

introduction to him. Perhaps he'll give you a little of his time when you're in Paris."
Wolfgang is feeling shy again. Could he really audition for such an important person? He resolves to thoroughly read the texts he found in his host's library.

A few weeks later, Wolfgang decides to move on to Paris. He can travel with a colleague of Jacobus who has been appointed at the *Collège Royal*. That will make the journey safer. Despite the treaties of Münster, France is still at war with Spain. That means unrest. Under the name *The Fronde* members of parliament and other important government institutions are reacting to the tax burdens imposed on the wealthy. French politics is following the opposite path of what is happening elsewhere, they say. Parliament and the nobility are heavily critical of Anne of Austria's regency. Property owners are seeing their taxes increase. Taxes on the wealthy have been recurring for some time, but parliamentarians, the wealthy citizens of Paris, and the nobility had thus far been able to avoid them quite effectively. The *fronde* consists mainly of this group of wealthy individuals. They are now revolting because they can no longer escape the tax.
Jacobus's colleague assures Wolfgang that no hostile feelings were observed towards the *Collège Royal* and his members. So Wolfgang leaves Basel as soon as the weather permits. A good month later, he arrives in Paris.

Wolfgang has made good use of the letters of introduction he received for Paris. He attends lectures at both the Sorbonne and the *Collège Royal*. He feels everywhere the pressure exerted by the Jesuits on higher education as a result of the Council of Trent.

Between lectures, one of the required topics is the assassination of the English King. Charles I was beheaded on January 30, 1649, on charges of high treason. Everyone has their opinion on the changes underway under Oliver Cromwell. Wolfgang is asked if he knows more about the pretender to the throne, Charles II, now he living is in the Dutch Republic or in the German Empire. After all, the treaty Mazarin concluded with Cromwell had the added consequence Charles II had to leave France. There is speculation about the future of England. Can a modern nation be governed as a Commonwealth? Is this another form of absolutism? Will Cromwell become king after abolishing monarchy? Or will the pretender avenge his father? Time will tell.

A letter from Amsterdam confirms what Wolfgang's father and his correspondents already suspected. Both in *Belgium Fœderatum* as *Belgium Regia* the Great School evolved towards Latin School. This served only as an entrance to the Athenaeum, the Collegium, or the university. The Jesuits' grip on the Latin school curriculum is complete in *Belgium Regia* but also strongly present in *Belgium Fœderatum*. And not only in both *Belgia*. Wolfgang knows from his own observations that the same is

true in the German Empire and in France.
His father also gives him another piece of news. In Russia, Alexis has legally installed serfdom. That statute may be of some use, but it's hardly better than brutal slavery. But it does give a good idea of how the propertied class views servants.

***

Mr. Guy Patin

I take the liberty of writing to you regarding my upcoming audience with Monsieur François de La Mothe Le Vayer. I have read the 1643 edition of his work dedicated to Mazarin Of Freedom and Servitude. *I found a copy in the library of your correspondent and friend of my father, Jacobus Schulthess. The audience was arranged for me by the same Jacobus. At the time, I sent my letters of introduction to Monsieur François when I arrived in Paris. He informed me to arrange the details for our meeting with you.*

With respectful thanks. Wolfgang Magister

Wolfgang receives a response quite quickly. Guy Patin informs him that François de La Mothe Le Vayer expects his appointment as preceptor to the Duke of Orleans, Louis' brother, during the current month of June. Therefore, it would be more convenient for him not to postpone the audience until August, as previously planned. He can free up two hours the following week for Wolfgang Magister. Guy Patin reminds him that Monsieur de La Mothe Le Vayer is now sixty. He enjoys hearing praise for himself but rarely praises anyone but himself. He further writes that, as Wolfgang may have observed in his reading, Monsieur de La Mothe Le Vayer displays a rather mischievous disposition,

similar to that of Diagoras and Protagoras. Finally, he suggests that Wolfgang structure a questionnaire and return it immediately. This will certainly enhance the content of the conversation.

A few days later, Wolfgang sits opposite Philippe d'Anjou's newly appointed preceptor.

"I was deeply moved as soon as I read your writings by Jacobus Schulthess. May I call you master? Because that is what you have become for me."

"You may call me whatever you like, young man. That doesn't change anything about me. So you read my reservations about freedom and servitude."

"You say that freedom is the natural state of all living things. Animals die of boredom and despair when they lose their freedom. Is that because we humans constantly think we will regain our freedom?"

"I'm not saying that humans want to regain freedom. I'm saying humans want to escape servitude. They do this with more determination than most animals. That's what distinguishes them from animals. It's what makes them close to the superior intelligences. But whether this means that humans are free or want to be free is highly questionable. They often enslave themselves."

"So freedom is an intangible state?"

"Intangible... it's not something you can hold in your hand, no. You simply can't grasp everything, although many clearly reach out their grasping hands for all tangible things."

"Physical freedom and its opposite?"

“Physical freedom is an illusion today, a consequence of the law of man who invented war, the ritual of permitted killing. But instead of killing the enemy, one can also offer them their life. Man gives life to another Man. Do you understand? That is not a divine but a human willing.”
“And that makes the original natural bodily freedom impossible?”
“It is, at any rate, the reason why the first Eastern philosophers, about whom Diodorus speaks, defend a law describing the use of servants.”
“And if I understand correctly, no amount of spiritual freedom can match that.”
“Oh, did you understand that? Freedom of spirit cannot be anything other than the knowledge that we are accountable only to ourselves and to God for our physical and spiritual activities. We receive a ray of light from the Eternal Reason as soon as we are a product of this world. We must consciously know this before we can investigate whether those who boast of being free are actually free.”
“And the unmistakable rule not to do to others what you would not want done to you is the crux of the matter, you say.”
“I’m saying that. The followers of Pythagoras symbolised servitude with a ring. They don’t want to wear a ring because it puts pressure on the finger. Every rule puts pressure.”
“But so does the rule of not doing to others what you would not want to happen to yourself.”
“I didn’t invent that rule, young man. I merely observe that it’s not being followed. Countless people sell their freedom for very

little. They do to themselves what they don't do to others. The desire for a small gratification today makes them forgo all future desires. Many value themselves less than the money and possessions they possess. Many are slaves to their passions."

"So, you say, if human freedom is the combination of physical freedom and spiritual freedom, then no one is truly free."

"Yes, that's what I'm saying. And that's why I'm looking at philosophical freedom. Does it exist? Cofroes had his doubts. Why else would he have included a clause in the peace treaty with the Romans stipulating that philosophers would not be brutalised or forced to change their opinions? And what other reason could there be for Leon so unholy Portuguese to ask Henry III in his realm no other deity than the sun be worshipped?"

"But doesn't the *Scola* praise the freedom of critical thinking?"

"One might wonder whether humanity can truly achieve the independent freedom the School speaks of through philosophy. It seems healthier to me to say that the Sage, being a free man, is more a wishful goal than a reality."

"And the desire for power is stronger than the desire for freedom, you say more clearly than anyone else."

"Yes, I say that. Others say it too. The animals' passion for freedom is nothing compared to the courtiers' lust for power. They sacrifice the best days of their lives because they believe they will one day acquire the power that will allow them to fulfil all their desires. And no one wants to learn from the experience of others. They are all convinced that Providence will be more favourable to them than to their fellow sufferers. It's like the

ships to the Indies. One successful voyage sets a hundred to sail, without anyone thinking of the thousand others who were shipwrecked."

Now that the great man has hit his stride, he speaks of the courtiers who imitate the king in hairstyle and posture simply to stay in his good graces. Even when the king changes something for personal or health reasons, such as a lice infestation or a neck or facial pain resulting from a deformity, many imitate him. He also speaks of the way courtiers calmly accept being mistreated. Wanting to be like the great is a form of self-imposed slavery.

This also demonstrates the power of the Prince and his spiritual leader. If the Prince shows a love for literature, everyone will want to be wise and educate their children. If one is dealing with a sovereign who disdains science, everyone will be affected by barbarism.

"And aren't philosophers free men?" asks Wolfgang.

"Be logical in your reasoning. If philosophers, because they are philosophers and because of their vision, have sought to exalt themselves above all the crowned heads; if they became slaves to their arrogance, like others to their passions; if the servitude of the Court is diametrically opposed to philosophical freedom and yet attracts so many people, as we have tried to show in our texts; then you cannot help but conclude that no one is absolutely free."

There is a moment of silence in the room. Then Wolfgang says: "Master, for the remaining time you wish to grant me, I would like to speak with you about what you describes as *Sens*

Commun, Common Sense and your thoughts about it. I translate the term into Dutch as *General Common Sense*, the meaning given to things by general mutual agreement."

"I'll leave the translation to you .*Common sense* is a false sense of generality. I believe that whoever uses it is very mistaken. To accept *common sense* as good and to consider the most vulgar opinions the best. As if making mistakes weren't the most common thing. As if there were nothing as foolish as the crowd. And as if the great road wasn't the road of the beasts."

"*Common sense* free thinking more difficult?"

"It's more complicated. It's what made Pythagoras tell his followers that popular actions can destroy all discipline. *Common sense* ridiculed Hippocrates and Democritus for formulating hypotheses that contradicted her. Consider, for example, the idea of the multiplicity of worlds. *Common sense* made the greatest philosophers of antiquity appear foolish in their time. But I have seen few great minds of inestimable merit in our own age who have not been slandered by the vulgar mind that considers foolish anything that deviates from its own *Common sense*."

"*Common sense* is the plague of ignorance?"

"Ignorance is not a plague but a condition. There are, of course, causes for ignorance which are not under the control of the ignorant. But I am speaking of all the ignorant for whom *Common sense* is the sole argument. And you find them everywhere, among those who wear the habit as well as those who wear the uniform, those who dwell in gilded cabinets as well as those at fairs, because all kinds of professions contain the

people we are talking about."
"That makes life very difficult for literates."
"Often, yes. That's why great thinkers sometimes prefer solitude to civilised conversation. They don't want to be infected by the breath of the people. Because whether it's brazen ignorance or perverse doctrine, one is always affected by it. Whether the plasterer whitewashes someone or the coal merchant smears someone, the stain remains visible."
"I have been told that some of what I consider to be great minds, which does not necessarily mean that you agree, have retired to Port Royal, but are nevertheless willing to hold classes with the children of the Petite École that has been founded there."
"Perhaps you'd better visit Port Royal yourself to form your mind. As for myself, I'm constantly amazed by the arrogance and audacity of the human mind to condemn anything unusual or new, as if that were the rule for all things."
"Therefore, you contrast ethics and cosmopolitanism with *common sense*?"
"I am not making a contradiction. I am simply making the observation of how relative the *common sense* is. What is generally known about the thoughts of others in Europe, let alone in Asia, Africa, or the New World? And what if there is more land than what geographers have already mapped? Or other worlds? What must be the thoughts of the beings there?
Who has himself guided by his own *Common sense* thought about the thinking of all peoples, of all cosmopolitans? No. It is unbearably arrogant to exclaim oneself as a herald of the

Common sense when one only knows the thoughts of one's nearest neighbours.

The discovery of the New World has introduced us to a people whose customs and traditions are very different from our own. We often consider any of their Sages mad. But many of them would have considered us mad as well. *Common sense* says that dreams are deceptive. The peoples of Nouvelle France accept them as true. We are described with wondrous prophecies that these people derive from dreams. They also keep saying that every people is specific as soon as we try to impose a different perspective on them. How can you consider an overall *Common sense?"*

"And Ethics?"

"Young man, our time is drawing to a close and other pursuits call me. But let me tell you this. Ethics. Is that *also* or *nothing more than* respect for parents, love for country and *that* certain goal that everyone should set for themselves throughout life? Consider these three points skeptically, and we can judge everything else.

I just have time to let you think about the first point. Many people extend filial piety to include respect for the common father. For many minds, filial piety entails defending parents. Protecting parents would therefore give you a certain ethical right to go to extremes. And so you can suddenly create an ethical argument that justifies killing anyone who disrespects the common father."

"So, if that common father is the God of you and your neighbours, then you have an ethically acceptable argument for

making an exception to the law. *"You shall not kill"* which you first accepted in the name of that same God…?"
"And now, young man, we say goodbye."
"Master, you have given me much more with this conversation than I could offer you with my modest questions. I thank you for this. May I ask you to include You in my *Liber Amicorum* and take the liberty of writing to you in the future?"
At this, François de La Mothe Le Vayer nods slightly, then extends his hand to Wolfgang's notebook and writes his name in it. As address he gives *The court of Monsieur Philippe, Duke of Orleans*.

Wolfgang is preparing for his upcoming trip to Köthen when he receives news from Amsterdam that his family is leaving for Frankfurt for an indefinite period. Wolfgang's father ultimately accepts his uncle's offer to publish his memoirs. His memories of Ratke and his experiences among Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants in the *Athenaeum Illustre* are particularly noteworthy and interest the printer. He and his sons are convinced that this will be a very marketable book. The Magister family will keep the house in Amsterdam for the time being. Wolfgang can move in if he chooses to return to Amsterdam after his trip instead of joining the family in Frankfurt. The young man hasn't made a decision on this yet. He only knows that after Köthen, he wants to return to Amsterdam to talk about his journey with his friends, some of whom left around the same time as he did.
From Utrecht he receives the rather surprising news that Descartes, who was thought to have chosen a secluded life, has

decided to travel to Sweden at the insistence of the Swedish queen.

On his way to Köthen, Wolfgang had the opportunity to visit the Petite École in Port Royal. He met not only Antoine Sanglin but also some of the intellectuals staying there, *Les Solitaires.* This limited group decided to spend some of their time with the children living in the *Petite École* being taught in French. Wolfgang believes he finds the same underlying principle here as in Comenius' proposals. Initial education in the child's language leads to better understanding. These Jansenist intellectuals agree with this. It goes against the spirit of the times which in particular the Jesuits adhere to. The members of the Society continue to teach in Latin in the little schools, even when the children don't speak that language. Wolfgang is convinced that Ludovicus was wrong in Cologne. If only he had visited Port-Royal, he might have thought differently. It's unacceptable for education and science to be approached dogmatically. During his trip in the weeks that follow, he has time to reflect on his visit to Port-Royal and connect it with what he learned from François de La Mothe Le Vayer.

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The year 1650 is entering its fifth month. In a few weeks, Wolfgang will turn twenty. He hasn't been in Köthen long when he learns that Descartes died in Stockholm on February 11. Meanwhile, he also experiences the complications after the death of Prince Louis of Anhalt-Köthen. His son is only 12 and is therefore placed under the guardianship of Louis' brother, August of Anhalt-Plätzkau. Wolfgang's mother's family belongs

to the patricians of Köthen. Two members of the family are printers and members of the *Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft*. This society, of which Prince August was also a member, gradually achieved increasing success. It now has members in about all Reformed regions of the German Empire. There are also a growing number of members who are not of noble descent. Shortly before Prince Ludwig's death, one of the proud Lords therefore proposed splitting the society into a noble order with animal symbols and a civil society of scholars with plant prints as symbols. Prince Ludwig indignantly rejected the proposal. But now, after his death, the family is concerned about the society's future. It is already certain that the princes of Anhalt will play a lesser leadership role. There is a near-unanimous agreement to appoint Wilhelm IV of Saxe-Weimar as successor at the head of the society, although it is known that this would place the society's decision-making center considerably further south of Köthen.

Wolfgang receives news from Leszno that Comenius has escaped him once again. He is traveling to Skalice and then on to Horní Považí. There he will meet the large group of Moravian Brethren.

Wolfgang has no intention of moving so far southeast of Amsterdam. Moreover, he doesn't have the necessary travel documents. He forgoes a meeting with Ian Amos and decides to stay with his mother's family until after next winter. After that, he will return to Amsterdam. He writes to his parents about this. He will move into the family home and manage it as best he can, while he stays in the *Athenaeum Illustre* wants to put the

knowledge he has acquired into practice, with a series of lectures for those who wish to take up teaching positions with sound preliminary training.

Back in Amsterdam

In June 1651, at the age of 21, Wolfgang moves into his parents' house in Amsterdam. Upon his return home, he receives a letter confirming his suspicions from the Köthen family. The leadership of the *Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft* indeed passes into the hands of Duke Wilhelm IV of Saxe-Weimar. This ruler pursues a more representative course. At the time, it innovative and successfully embodied Ratke's ideas. According to the family, the company gradually focused more on managing heritage than on introducing innovative elements.
Wolfgang has little time to discuss this with his family. He starts as a guest lecturer with lectures at the *Athenaeum*. The rest of his time he sets up chat groups with friends to share experiences.

About six months before Wolfgang's return, William II of Orange died. Wolfgang and his friends discuss the Grand States General's decision not to elect a new Stadtholder. This seemed to be an advantage for Amsterdam.
But Oliver Cromwell has other dreams in England. He wants to work with the States General to create a kind of replica of what Tordesillas was for Portugal and Spain a century and a half ago. At that time, the Portuguese and Spanish Royal Houses quietly divided the world they considered to be the legal owners of as if

it were their own backyard. Cromwell sees the Republic of the Seven United Provinces as the owner of Asia and Africa, while helping England acquire the Americas from the Spanish. However, the States General has no desire whatsoever for new confrontations with the Southern Netherlands, where the Spanish Crown rules. The English Parliament rejects a counterproposal for a treaty guaranteeing free trade between both nations. The threat to trade hegemony from the Republic seems too great to him.

The lectures at the *Athenaeum* and his parents' allowance for housing give Wolfgang the time and resources to continue his search for inspiration. He doesn't want to be a printer, he's clearly not an artist, and has little desire to study law. So, it's now certain he will continue the family business: Magister. Ultimately, that's partly why he decided to pursue his *German journey* and his *French journey*. He visited several little schools and Latin schools. He was able to observe firsthand the generally low intellectual level of the teachers and lecturers. The little school of Port-Royal is of course a welcome exception. And what about in the Republic? He decides to spend a few months in Groningen and visit little schools where the Hanebooks replaced the ABC hornbooks. He writes to his parents:
The roads continue to present a pitiful sight, especially after the winter rains. As long as the governing authorities can't agree on the length of the wheel axles, the tracks won't be uniform. And even with local agreements, we won't get there. After more than forty years, the northern provinces and the southern ones still have their own gauges. Gouda proposed

allowing the axles to be extended with chocks, which could be removed when reaching regions with narrower gauges. I can already hear the coachmen asking for help from the unsuspecting traveler suddenly designated as wagon lifter. And Belgium Regia *has its own rules. I hear that the track sizes there differ greatly from what is used in* Belgium Fœderatum *is used. In the German Empire the size is different again.*
So long live the river barge and coastal shipping, as long as there's wind that doesn't turn into a storm. Throughout the Republic, promises are being made for a better network of towpaths along existing and future canals for the next twenty years or so. For my trip to Groningen, I borrowed a horse from my friend Wilhelmus. This way, I can make part of the journey by boat and have a mount at hand where a barge isn't available.

In Groningen, a village teacher receives 1 guilder per year for each child in need. So, he provides with additional jobs. This is relatively easy because the children's school attendance is very irregular. The classroom serves more as childcare during those times of the year when parents don't need their children for other activities.
In addition to the ABC hornbook which doesn't break easily in the grasping hands of children, teachers have a second schoolbook. In various parts of the Republic, city authorities designate the *Haneboek* to use. Wolfgang is even less enthusiastic about it than about the way the city councils are tackling the gauge issue. The book is less durable than the hornbook and usually cheap and poorly printed. And the intention remains to memorize the book, not actually read it.

Besides the alphabet and the Lord's Prayer, which is also on the hornbook, it contains a text about the Christian faith, the most important prayers of the day, and sometimes the Ten Commandments of the Lord.
This cheap ABC book is just about the only book that poorer children will ever come into contact with. And that might not be such a bad thing, Wolfgang cynically considers. He's thinking of the best-selling printed book for young people. That's *De spiegel van de jeugd*, with which Herman Koster has been preaching his fierce hatred of the Spanish, the Pope, and Catholics in general since 1614. The book has become a sensation in Amsterdam and gradually throughout the Republic. There have already been at least ten reprints; the book remains richly illustrated with woodcuts depicting horrific scenes, in which the Spanish and the Inquisitors are the only devilish characters. According to Wolfgang, the book exemplifies the arrogant way in which one's own thinking is imposed to the detriment of all ways of thinking. One can't even consider the contents of *De Spiegel van de Jeugd* an antithesis to philosophy. It is simply vulgar and base. Moreover, its popularity among Counter-Remonstrants and the generally illiterate population raises questions about the much-vaunted tolerant Republic that scholars and literates embrace.

A Latin school has now opened in Groningen, as in many other cities in the Dutch Republic. Annual tuition easily amounts to ten guilders. Gradually, instruction in Latin schools is being standardised. Leiden University, in particular, determines the curriculum. This, in turn, has led to printer Elsevier gaining the

upper hand for the production and sale of books and compendia for a large number of Latin schools.
Few attend the Groningen Latin School. As in other cities of the Republic, only about seven out of every hundred boys over the age of ten attend. Wolfgang's correspondents from the German Empire and France tell him that this is still better than in their respective cities.
Wolfgang speaks with numerous village teachers, lecturers, and the instructors of the Latin School. He consistently finds that almost none of his interviewees possesses any teaching skills. Some are better qualified, but more focused on teaching religion than on nature and human knowledge of it. He dreams of a true training program in teaching skills. The Jesuits are engaged in this. But he thinks more of the more liberal ideas of François de La Mothe Le Vayer for such a program.

Back in Amsterdam, Wolfgang divides his time between working as a private tutor for those preparing for university and filling in for absent teachers in the*Athenaeum Illustre*. This still gives him enough free time to organize gatherings of friends at his home. These regular gatherings do not go unnoticed by Laurens De Geer. He suggests to Wolfgang to join the circle of free-thinking intellectuals who are at the *Huis der Hoofden* a place to study and meet, thanks in part to the extensive library that Laurens' father built up and which is still growing.
One evening Wolfgang is entertaining his conversation circle about the *Academia Naturae Curiosorum* recently founded in Schweinfurt, not far from Frankfurt. The physicians Johann Bausch, Johann Fehr, Georg Metzger, and Georg Wohlfarth took

the initiative. Wolfgang argues for the importance of *Academia* to be established that does not only focus on the classical *artes liberales*. There is a growing interest today in the knowledge of nature. Observation and experimentation are just as important, if not more, than logical reasoning and discourse. According to him, the latter is still too strongly based on citing authors in the Latin School. Wolfgang is still speaking when Hildegarde Lesmeister joins the discussion group. Hildegarde is a regular visitor to the *Huis der Hoofden*, where she often plays music and sometimes sings songs. Not long ago, she recited some ballads by François de Montcorbier, better known as François Villon. This caused quite a bit of laughter, but also sparked a discussion about the independent spirit seeking its liberation from dogma.

For some time now, the gatherings have been an opportunity for Wolfgang and Hildegarde to see each other. Today, late in the evening, Wolfgang asks Hildegarde if he can walk her home.
"I've been waiting for the moment you'd muster up the courage to ask me that," Hildegarde laughs. She offers him her arm, and together they walk along the canal toward the patrician house belonging to her family. Along the way, they talk about Wolfgang's *Iter.* Hildegarde's is particularly interested in the encounters with Jacobus and François de La Mothe. She surprises Wolfgang when she begins discussing her correspondence with Anna Maria Van Schurman.
"Are you talking about that Anna Maria who managed to study as a woman at the University of Utrecht?"
"The same. I try to correspond with women in various places around the world. Elisabeth now lives in Heidelberg and is also

part of my correspondence circle."
"Elisabeth?"
"Elisabeth of Palts. I went to visit her with my mother at the time. I told her about my fruitless attempts to get enrolled in the *Athenaeum*. She gave me a copy of her treatise on women's rights to pursue a scientific education. Meanwhile, as you know, I was able to receive homeschooling and thus study. I want to continue exploring the role that learned women have played in history."
"And I try to find a way to make history, development and knowledge common property for all young people, girls and boys. I observe what happens outside the intellectual circles of urban centres. Much is needed to tackle *Common sense*."
That first walk is followed by more and more frequent ones. Increasingly, the young people discuss not only their dreams for humanity, but also their desire to go through life together. And so it happens that while the Dutch authorities are concerned about the disastrous outcome of the Battle of Nieuwpoort, a more cheerful atmosphere prevails at the Lesmeister and Magister household. Wolfgang has received permission from Hildegarde's parents to propose. During the preparations for their wedding, Wolfgang's family comes over from Frankfurt. His parents will ultimately remain in Amsterdam until the Treaty of Westminster is finally signed on April 15, 1654.

Although not everyone expresses it, many are convinced that Westminster is highly unlikely to bring definitive peace. Too much is at stake now that European Royal Houses are witnessing the end of the Spanish Habsburg's global hegemony.

In France, Louis is the rising star. Once he comes of age, he is crowned Louis XIV. Around that time, a café opens in Marseille where coffee can be bought and drunk. The Arab *coffee* has long been known in Venice and is slowly spreading throughout Europe. Wolfgang heard about it from a Jewish family who first moved from northern Spain to Marseille and are now staying with cousins in Amsterdam. They returned from Recife disappointed.

"But why did you go to Recife?" Wolfgang asks them one evening.

"Trade opportunities. You were probably a toddler when Johan Maurits took over the governorship of the territory the Republic had conquered from the Portuguese when they themselves were under Spanish tutelage. Johan Maurits guaranteed freedom of religion to the Catholic Portuguese and also welcomed the Jewish community. We were part of *Zur Israel* in Recife and were in contact with the *Maguen Abraham* group that settled in Mauritsstad. But by 1644 the tide had turned."

"Did Portugal regain control? I believe the House of Bragança wants to gain Portuguese independence from the Habsburg House, but so far, that hasn't been successful, has it?"

"No. But the main reason for the changes was that Johan Maurits was recalled. Freedom of religion was becoming increasingly less valid for the Jews."

"And Recife is still Dutch?"

"Yes, Recife is still governed by the Dutch, but we don't think that will last much longer. The Treaty of Westminster is gradually reducing maritime trade with the West Indies. And

besides, we've never been very independent when it came to trading goods. Although Johan Maurits always guaranteed free trade for New Netherlanders, some goods remained exclusive to the Dutch *Patented West India Company*. For example we never started the slave trade."
"No slave trade? But isn't that something good???"
"You're an idealist, Wolfgang. Where do you think the bulk of the profits come from? Why do you think Amsterdam can be generous with annual wages for those who, for example, work at *Athenaeum*?"
It's another bitter disappointment for Wolfgang. However much he lives with the will and goal of making knowledge more accessible and giving everyone the opportunity to perfect their literary and scholarly skills, the world continues to revolve around power and money. And he himself depends on it, whether he likes it or not.

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Things don't look good for the cosmopolitans and for those seeking peace. On June 27, 1655, the Habsburg Leopold I was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Pressburg, and just over a year later, the coronation was repeated in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. In Spain, Philip IV, another Habsburg, was still in power. And in France, Louis clearly showed himself to be behaving as an absolute monarch. These three powerful lords were Roman Catholic. Despite the visible tension among them, they guided and obeyed the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church.
England is in political disarray. Oliver Cromwell deserves the title of dictator, even though he continues to refuse kingship.

kingship.
Zeeland and Holland continue to reject every proposal for a new Stadtholder of the House of Orange. Johan de Witt speaks of true freedom. According to Wolfgang and his friends, this freedom must be put into perspective. Ultimately, Holland calls the shots, and government and power are in the hands of the nobility and wealthy patricians.

That day, Laurens de Geer has important news for his intellectual friends. The rise of the Roman Catholics is causing another bloodbath in parts of the German Empire where the Lutherans and the Reformed have influence. Those who do not convert are murdered or mutilated. Bohemia was already inaccessible to the Moravian Brethren. And then the war between Sweden and Poland flared up again. The Polish town of Leszno quickly becomes a dangerous place for Bishop Ian Amos Comenius. His house and almost all his possessions are lost. It is not the first time he has lost everything. Laurens decides to provide him with housing in the *Huis Der Hoofden* until Comenius and his family find their own shelter.
Despite the painful circumstances, there is great anticipation among teachers and professors from the circle of Wolfgang and Hildegarde now that they will finally be able to meet Comenius himself.

Meanwhile, there was other joyful news for the young couple. In the summer of 1656, their first son was born. They named him Pieter. They both read and heard stories about the diplomatic work of Pieter Paul Rubens, and as Hildegarde later

recounts, the choice of their son's name was no coincidence. The first time Hildegarde left little Pieter with the live-in caregiver and returned to the *Huis der Hoofden* her return has a festive touch with the donated *coffee*. One of the presents recently donated a bale of beans to the De Geer family.

The presence of Comenius often leads to discussions about education and training. During one of those conversations, Ian Amos talks about *Janua Linguarum:*

"I could never have imagined that this rather childish book would receive such a reception in the scholarly world. This became clear to me when I saw the personal expressions of interest from many. Now I discover how many languages the book has been translated into: besides Latin and Greek, it also exists in Bohemian, Polish, German, Swedish, English, Spanish, Italian, French, and even Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Mongolian, which I am assured is understood by all of the East Indies."

"The reception of this book has made it clear just how eager people are to learn when given the opportunity," says Wolfgang.

"Many talk about what they learned, but few worry about how one comes into contact with knowledge," another argues.

"Where is the line between teaching someone and prescribing how they should think or learn to think?" asks Hildegarde.

"Teaching is supporting others in attaining wisdom. Giving a prescription can be useful, but not if it lacks support. What support does the hornbook provide?"

"And is there a method to learn to think about things?"

"We know that Descartes was hesitant to give prescriptions."

"I remember the passage from the *Discours de la méthode* which goes something like: '*My purpose here is not to teach the method everyone must follow to properly conduct their reasoning, but only to show how I have attempted to conduct mine. Those who give instructions are obligated to consider themselves more skilful than those to whom they direct; for the slightest lapse, they are to blame. But by presenting my writing simply as a story, or rather, as a fable, with a few examples we can imitate, perhaps there will be other stories we can follow as well. I hope they will be useful to some and harmful to no one, and that everyone will appreciate my candour*.'."

Ian Amos smiles. "René Descartes disagreed with me when I proposed my pansophy. Perhaps he saw in it the prescription he himself preferred to avoid."

"But do you want regulations for the education of young people and adults? Like the Jesuits do? Do you propose a method?"

"I don't see my work as a prescription, but as a guideline. *Omnes Omnia Omnino,* that's what I want to achieve. My general proposal for the pansophical school is to transform schoolwork into play and fun. No one seems to want to hear about that. The nobles even prefer to regard free people as slaves. Teachers base their authority on a grim countenance, stern words, and often corporal punishment."

"The little school with its ABC hornbooks in many places in Europe and the New World certainly takes away any enjoyment of learning. Even the Hanebooks here in the Netherlands, which I've seen used in Groningen, limit children's learning to memorising letters, syllables, and a few prayers. On *Athenaeum*

Illustre we ever talk about it among ourselves *Omnes Omnia Omnino*. We call it *the dangerous thought*, because making everyone thoroughly familiar with everything is not necessarily the desire of those who wish to exercise power over others."

"My patrons wield great power, yet they continue to support my work. They are, however, much less patient than I am and sometimes demand unreasonably fast results. Yet, I'm also known for not always having the necessary patience when it comes to teaching."

"But I'm thinking of other rulers," says Wolfgang. "We encounter ignorant rulers just about everywhere. Teachers who confuse teaching with putting on grim expressions are part of that group. Many figures from both the secular and clerical hierarchy don't appreciate subordinates being thoroughly familiar with everything."

"If I'm not mistaken, your pansophical school was initially supported over there in Hungary, but the school even faced opposition from the Reformers as soon as the Roman Catholic Church regained influence," Laurens notes."You say *a dangerous thought*," says Ian Amos thoughtfully. "Yes. And yet. How can explaining God's creation be a dangerous thought? Isn't that God's own will? You're not talking about leaders, but about misanthropes. Only misanthropes can we imagine wanting to deny others knowledge. I'm preparing the proofs of *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. In this book, children and young people can find a description of the world. It will give them the pleasure of looking at illustrations and connecting them with words from their own language and from Latin. It will give them a visible

image of the universe."
"Is that book meant to help the teachers, or to help the children?" asks Wolfgang.
"It definitely helps the children," answers Ian Amos. "Among those who have taught themselves, there are many examples that humans can explore almost anything by relying solely on Nature. The intellect and the emotional are connected. Nature and didactics are connected. Nature and mathetics are connected."
"So the children who have that book don't need teachers?" Wolfgang insists.
"Observing things, or having knowledge about them, is nothing more than the inner knowledge about them. This requires the same things as speculation or external vision: the eye, the object, and light. These three elements together create vision. In inner vision, the eye is the mind or intelligence, the object is all things placed within and outside our mind, and the light is the attention paid to them. If teachers understand this, they can use that knowledge to help children acquire the same knowledge.

In the following days Wolfgang can implement the plan for *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*. He better understands the author's enthusiasm for this book. You can safely consider it a *Janua Linguarum* for children. A children's book that is not a schoolbook and yet a textbook. The view on the nature of things is clearly that of a peace-loving person and far removed from the hateful *Spiegel voor de Jeugd*. Yet Wolfgang has doubts. It remains a specific view of the nature of things. Copernicus and Galileo are not part of it.

But that won't be the teachers' concern. No, bearing in mind the little schools he visited, the problem lies elsewhere. This book contains more scholarship and knowledge than a village teacher possesses. Does anyone accept such a book, or does they see it as an attack on their authority? After all, the problem with little schools is that they do very superficial work.

The most important elite schools, in turn, are in the hands of the church in Catholic Europe. And in Reformed Europe, the control is no less. Patricians and nobility have no doubts about this because they themselves encourage this state of affairs. Wolfgang is well aware of how the ruling class protects the places of study that will offer their own descendants a place in the world compatible with their status. Only a few should be allowed to transcend their lineage. These few come from the wealthy bourgeoisie or from large farming families. And this must happen under strict supervision. In Roman Catholic countries, this preferably takes place in Jesuit colleges. In other countries, the elite schools are also intended only for that same limited audience. For the *Grammar School* at Saint Paul's in London, founder John Colet received advice from Erasmus. It is a good example of this elite school model.

For Wolfgang, it is abundantly clear today that there is no direct connection between Reformers and improved access to knowledge and science, just as there is no direct connection between the Counter-Reformation and ignorance. Regardless of religious background, it remains a dangerous idea to familiarize everyone with everything, especially if this results in both religious dogmas and secular hierarchy becoming the subject of

questioning.
Wolfgang discusses this with the now seventy-year-old Étienne de Courcelles who is delighted to learn that Wolfgang is even more committed than his father to ensuring better preparation of teachers and instructors. Regarding the education of the people in general, he says only that enslavement can never lead to freedom, not even the freedom of those who enslave others.
Wolfgang sees these words as confirmation of his own thinking. Those who wield power are so entrenched in their own servitude that they begin to regard hierarchy as natural. He writes about this to François de La Mothe, who sens him some of his more recent notes on *Liberté et Servitude*.

Last years in Amsterdam

The relationship between the Republic and England is regularly discussed. Charles II of England is in exile in Bruges. In the *Huis der Hoofden* there's much speculation about how long it will be before he returns to the English throne. Most think this will likely happen before Cromwell dies. But the Lord Protector isn't even sixty yet...

Son Wolfgang,
I'm glad to hear your living in Amsterdam are full of life. We sometimes miss the meetings and conversations at the Huis der Hoofden (House of Heads). Does Ian Amos still live there, or has his family already moved into their own home?
I'm pleased to announce that we now have several compendiums to facilitate language teaching in Latin schools. We continue to use multilingual text examples.

We hear other surprising news from Leopold. Your cousin is in contact with the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher of Geisa. He has been working in Rome for over twenty years, but he maintains ties to the German Empire. Leopold received a copy of his Scrutinium Physico-Medicum Contagiosae Luis, Quae Pestis Dicitur. *In it, Athanasius explains that under his microscope he has observed animalcules spontaneously developing in rotting flesh mixed with soil and water. He confirms that the plague can certainly have moral causes but suggests that thousands of minuscule creatures emerge from the many cracks in the ground, carrying the rottenness. Plants, animals, and even people are infected. When an infected person loses inner warmth, the disease also spreads through the victim's breath. It seems almost impossible. His fellow Jesuits certainly have many questions about this, especially when he discusses the spontaneous development of life. I find it particularly fascinating because, in addition to the classic use of "it is God's will" for everything that is inexplicable, this Jesuit also writes about his attempts to investigate nature as it is. In doing so, he sees the devilish rottenness emerging from the subsoil. Well…*
How are our grandchildren doing? We've never seen them, but they are part of the thoughts with which we embrace you.

Dear father and mother,

Let me tell you right now that we hope to be able to read Kircher's work soon. There's a reason for that. Hildegarde discovered the drawings of Johannes Goedaert from Middelburg through Jan Swammerdam. We bought a few of his drawings. We also learned from Jan that Goedaert is very interested in the metamorphosis that often occurs in nature. One of his guild friends is pushing for a publication of his observations of the

bloodless animals. He has followed the development of many of these animals. First, seeds transform into tiny worms, which, once they have grown sufficiently, metamorphose into chrysalis or something similar. There follows a period of apparent death and another transformation, this time into a fly or butterfly. It's amazing. We'll certainly hear from Jan if Johannes publishes his work. We thought of this when we read your post about Kircher's animalcules.

Here Orbis Sensualium Pictus *is now published. Laurens donated us a copy. "For services rendered," he added. I think he's referring to the way we sometimes help children from his extended circle of friends prepare for Latin School, the Athenaeum, or university. As a language teacher, I can't help but be delighted with* Orbis Sensualium Pictus. *Imagine a bilingual book with many illustrations. Children and young people can playfully pick it up and learn words and concepts in both the vernacular and Latin. I've already worked with it. The book might be just what we needed to teach science and philosophy in secular language.*

But even my delight in this instrument can barely mask my sadness and indignation about the state of the little schools. The correspondence that reaches me from everyone with whom I exchange letters on this subject, and the letters that reach friends of mine from even more remote areas, paint the following picture. The little school is little more than a religious school. The focus is on learning to read, then learning to write, and finally learning to calculate, in successive grades. But in reality, I'm told, the majority of children don't progress to the second phase. This has more to do with the teachers than with the children. Teaching children to write is a more difficult task than teaching them to read. Good equipment is essential for

this. Few village schools employ teachers who can sharpen good pens and prepare good ink, I'm told. In French cities, the situation is supposedly somewhat better. But here, I'm told, master writers do everything they can to keep their art for themselves. And they're rather scarce.
In Spain and England, yes, in England too, many do not get around to writing because it involves additional school fees.
In Spain, they talk about 2 reais a month for learning to read, 4 for learning to read and write, and 6 for learning arithmetic. The poor can't afford that.
And we can ask ourselves how to settle in here Omnes Omnia Omnino*, where the poor have no or abysmal education. But what can we say of the English colonies? Schools are crudely built sheds with log walls. The windows are made of paper greased with lard, making them waterproof and transparent. Ugh. Hornbooks are often the only available teaching materials.*
One more message. Charles II is still in exile in Bruges. From there, news reaches us that Oliver Cromwell has died. His supporters are trying to convince his son to accept his successor. How long before Charles sails the Britanicus Oceanus again? We sense the tension among the regents of Zeeland and Holland. Hopefully, it won't erupt into open warfare again.
Your two grandchildren are doing well. Pieter is already quite a character and babbles away. Thank God, the second newborn is also in good health. We hope and pray it stays that way.

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1665. The Magister-Lesmeister family follows what happens in their world from Amsterdam.
At the beginning of the year, Anne Stuart, the second daughter of Charles II's brother, was born.
Despite the *fronde* movement in France and all the subsequent

intrigues, Louis XIV sits on the throne as sole ruler. Anne Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, who during the second *fronde* was very active now lives a rather secluded life. She considers herself a Jansenist and takes on the role of protector of the Abbey of Port-Royal des Champs, Hildegarde knows. This doesn't prevent the pending closure of the *Petite École de Port Royal*, as she and Wolfgang learned shortly before leaving for Frankfurt.

Who in the *Huis der Hoofden* bet on the return of the royal family to England was able to reap his profits. Just five years ago, Charles II set foot on the coast of Dover. That same year, a group of scholars and intellectuals from various colleges, universities, literary and scientific circles founded *The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge.* The association is established by Royal Decree as *The Royal Society*. It is a male-dominated affair and with little attention paid to education in general. Nevertheless, Wolfgang and Hildegarde consider it a good thing that, after the earlier local *Academia Naturae Curiosorum,* now also an association under the auspices of a reigning king separates science from theology.

The new confirmation of other news is once again a hard blow for the couple. Many Amsterdam patricians as well as the *Patented West India Company* have always been involved in the human trade, primarily on the slave coasts of West Africa. On the island of São Tomé and on the mainland of the bay in which it lies, the trading posts of the time were used almost exclusively for the purchase of slaves for transport to the Americas. The naval battles organised by European rulers were solely aimed at

safeguarding their own commercial interests. There was never a clear mandate from kings or churches to put an end to the inhumane slave trade. The fact that their wages ultimately come directly from the profits of that trade is becoming increasingly pressing for Wolfgang and Hildegarde.

From Sweden, traders bring a different message. Recently, copper and silver coins have become exchangeable for printed banknotes. A bank stores the metal and gives the paper in exchange. This is the result of the increasingly heavier copper coins. The metal has become cheaper over the years, so the coins are larger and heavier to maintain their relative value to silver. In a sense, they adopted a thousand-year-old custom from China, where paper money was introduced long ago to prevent wealthy merchants from having to carry heavy loads of coins.

Ian Amos Comenius has a small Czech printing house not far from the *Huis der Hoofden* that homes he and his family. Since 1662, he is an extraordinary member of the printers' guild.

The first coffeehouse opened in Amsterdam. Now, you can also enjoy coffee in a public place here, instead of what's usually served in inns and taverns. Coffee drinkers are hardly aware that the cultivation and production of their beverage also involved slave labour.

For several years, Spinoza had been living and working in Rijnsburg. When the first part of his manuscript *Ethics* reached his Amsterdam friends in 1663, he was accused of suffering from the same ailment as Diagoras, Protagoras, and François de La Mothe Le Vayer. Christian moralists took his writings to task and called him impious.

The *Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition* of the Catholic Church decides to put the works of Descartes on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. The books are banned *donec corrigator*, until they are made just right. "Made just right" means "made as the church hierarchy thinks," a friend of Wolfgang's wittily observes.

During the first half of the year, Hildegarde and Wolfgang sell all their real estate in Amsterdam. Thanks to the intervention of Wolfgang's family, they purchase the townhouse in Frankfurt where they still live. They ship to Frankfurt their library and other necessary belongings they want to keep. Two weeks after Pieter's ninth birthday, Wolfgang and Hildegarde leave Amsterdam for good, accompanied by their three children and their faithful nanny.

Frankfurt

The family takes a few months to settle into their new town. Pieter begins attending Latin School. The two youngest children are left in the care of their nanny.
Leopold and his sons Johannes and Martin proposed to Wolfgang a printing society with the aim of further expanding the supply of books containing new ideas in the fields of science and educational art. Wolfgang is not directly involved in the printing work. His task is to search for interesting works and, if necessary, adapt them for German readers. Hildegarde has proposed collating information about women in the history of art and science. The printing and publication of the wildly

popular almanacs in various languages will fund the project.
The family's new home is a spacious house with a courtyard garden, located near the smaller house where Wolfgang's parents are spending their retirement. They are thrilled with the arrival of three grandchildren. While the other grandchildren were born nearby, Wolfgang's brother and sister don't live in Frankfurt. The nanny laments with a smile that she barely has time to teach the two youngest children to read and write. And Hildegarde is expecting a fourth child.
The family brings from *Belgium Fœderatum* a modified version of the Catholic St. Nicholas celebration. Although the Reformers tried to eradicate the cult of Catholic saints and sanctified, children in Holland still sing *Sinter Klaas, o Heil'ge Man. Trek je beste Tabbaart an; En wilje me dan wat geven, Zo dien ik je al men leven.*Yet, the saintly friend of children gradually became more of a bogeyman. He often takes on the image of the devilish black man with jester's bells and chains. Black Nicholas still gives gifts to good children, but his role now mainly consists of instilling fear in children who misbehave towards their parents or other adults when they persist in their evil ways.

Meanwhile, the Republic is once again at war with England, despite the family ties between Charles II and the House of Orange. William does not hold the position of stadtholder over the entire Republic. Moreover, his primary concern is protecting commercial interests to ensure the necessary taxes. The English king has previously suffered setbacks, not least as a result of a plague epidemic and the enormous fire of 1666 in London. Although the fire put an end to the epidemic, the city is largely

destroyed. The reconstruction of the city and the defeats at sea compel Charles II to sign the Treaty of Breda. The treaty favours commercial shipping, both for *Belgium Fœderatum* as for the German Empire. The redistribution of the occupied overseas territories continues. The English occupy New Netherlands, while the United Provinces take in Suriname.
The plague epidemic in England has another side effect. In the tranquility of his isolation, the researcher Isaac Newton, who has fled the infection, describes what he will call the Law of Gravitation.
In Amsterdam the heirs of Johannes Seidelius publish a new edition of the *Janua Linguarum Reserata*. The reprint confirms the success of the dutch book published in 1658 *Unlocked door of languages to learn the Latin language concisely at the same time as the things themselves*.
News arrives from France that Colbert, following the example of the Italians, Germans, and English, is taking the initiative to establish an Academy. The institution will focus on science and provide advice on it to those in power. It offers membership to mathematicians, astronomers, botanists, physicists, zoologists, anatomists, and those skilled in the arts of *Scheydkonst (of separating things)*. The meetings are held in the facilities of the large *King's Library* producing over 4,500 titles.

During the Christmas period, Wolfgang receives a letter from Basel.
Dear and honoured friend,
I hope this letter finds you well, and that Hildegarde and your children are also enjoying good health. I hear about your efforts to

provide teachers and instructors with sound training, not only in religious matters but also in what natural scientists bring to our knowledge. I can only assume that you correspond on this subject with members of the various Academies that have been formed in various places over the past ten years.

Dear friends, I am writing to you today about a document written by a priest of the now banned Company of the Holy Sacrament *This secret society is said to have been an instrument of the Pope since the Council of Trent to combat reformers. This was done under the motto of doing all possible good and preventing all possible evil. The good, I was assured, included the accusation, condemnation, and execution of anyone who showed disrespect for the true faith. Mazarin, and later the King himself, subsequently banned the* Company.

The priest I'm referring to was an active member of that Company. His name is Charles Démia, and he went to work in Lyon explaining to patricians and other wealthy people how to treat the poor. It's no longer the case one simply has to care for the poor. No more pity, compassion, or even admiration for those who associate poverty with mysticism. Apparently, being poor is no longer a condition believed in by God. From now on, a group of His representatives on earth claim we must educate and correct the poor to become good servants and subordinates.

Charles Démia assures you that he wants to take on the training of teachers and instructors and argues as follows in his Remonstrances *to the lords of Lyon. He says they have succeeded in bringing the clergy and monasteries into order through the use of schools called Seminaries and Noviciates. Now, following this example and in order to achieve Christian peace, the cities and provinces should establish Little Schools where the children of the poor can go for an education in the fear of God and good morals.*

Capable teachers will teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic, which will enable them to work in most trades and professions. Thus, workshops will have good apprentices who can later become journeymen. The Little School teaches them to work hard and faithfully, gives them to understand how holy fruitful work is and how terrible idleness and deceit are. The Little Schools are fertile soil, where young plants germinate. Therefore, the teachers must inspire the youth to aversion to idleness and deceit and eliminate vice. The goal isn't to have them thoroughly study the Holy Scriptures, much less to learn Latin. Rather, a love for work is instilled as a sacred duty. Therefore, from a young age, children at school spend hours sewing buttons, knitting, and making lace. They remain at school only until they can perform a job that suits their nature. These arguments should be enough to dispel any potential resistance to such a holy undertaking, Démia concludes.

You see, my dear Wolfgang, the Little School with lessons in the vernacular that Comenius proposes for everyone can take on a completely different character. This is not the Omnes Omnia Omnino *School is either impart knowledge or enslave. Those who have the power choose to enslave others. That is also the case in your environment my dear friend, when I read about the content of schoolbooks, the teacher's meagre intellectual knowledge, and the wages he is destined to receive when he works with the poor. The humanist, indeed, chooses to renew the curriculum of the* artes liberales*, but only for the elite. Who then still thinks of a Little school that would make knowledge and science available to everyone? Few, my friend. Very few.*

In regions controlled by the Catholic Church and ruled by the Jesuits, people often talk about a separate, little school for girls. Nothing more. Women are not only excluded from the Latin School and the High School. Female roles and women's clothing are

forbidden in theatrical performances. Acting is considered good exercise for memory. But women must be completely banished from the minds of young people. Could God have been wrong after all when he created both man and woman?

I am told that the Latin School usually opens at half past seven in the summer. Classes end at ten in the morning. Students attend Mass and then go home. Afternoon classes run from one-thirty to four. In winter, the school day begins at eight. At the beginning of class, there is time to check assignments and review lessons. This is followed by an hour of study of a classical author, during which students practice grammar. In the lower grades (Rudimenta and Figura), students then study prosody. From Grammar onward, the study of Greek replaces the study of poetry.

I'm also told that the boys in the Latin School and the College or Higher School are partly responsible for organising instruction. In each class, someone acts as censor and monitors compliance with order and discipline. Generally, the class consists of two camps: a Greek camp and a Roman camp, for example. The camps have a hierarchical structure and compete with each other based on the exercises assigned by the instructor. The results determine who becomes camp leader. In the province of Flandro-Belgica, this division does not exist. I couldn't determine whether this is due to the influence of previous generations of instructors who were not trained by Jesuits.

In the College everyone speaks Latin. You can ask for an explanation in the vernacular. But if you do so, you will end up in the signum. *This is a list of names of those in the College who have used the vernacular. If someone is caught, he receives the* signum. *He must keep it with him as long as he cannot catch anyone else. Anyone found in possession of the* signum *when checked risks punishment. I find it hard to imagine how* signum *and Christian*

brotherhood are compatible. This seems more like a matter of secular competition and jealousy.
My dear friend, I may have been rambling on about these school practices. My only intention is to inform you, and that's what I've heard about schools in Catholic regions. I wonder if school labour will ever be transformed into play and enjoyment, as you wrote to me in a previous letter. It may be Comenius' wish, but it's certainly not Charles Démia's vision-
With this I take my leave of you, my esteemed friend, hoping to read you soon.
Your devoted Jacobus Schulthess

***

Honoured Master and Friend,
For three years now, our correspondence has been about Charles Démia's ideas for his Seminary for Teachers and Instructors and about our own efforts to provide sound training for teachers of children and young people.
Here in Frankfurt, we're making modest attempts. I also hear of some experiments in the Republic, and yes, even in Cologne there are preceptors who make themselves available to those working in the Little School.
I know from Hildegarde that our old correspondent Anna Maria Van Schurman joined the mystical sect of Jean de Labadie. The sect is currently residing in Amsterdam, but it remains to be seen whether she will remain there. In their search for the inner presence of God within humanity, Anna Maria writes, her fellow sect members place less emphasis on Holy Scripture. The group lives together in community. Personal possessions become group possessions. In this way, the group believes they are acting in the same way as the early Christians. The Church groups believers who

have been reborn free from sin. They do not feel bound by specific human rules. They rarely celebrate the Lord's Supper, disapprove of infant baptism, and have no strict rules about Sunday observance. Anna Maria wrote to us about her spiritual experience. We also discussed education, both in general and for women. According to her, spiritual education in her group is completely open to women. We haven't yet discussed the natural sciences and whether education is permitted in these fields.

In the little school in general, it seems difficult to let flourish the ideas of the Petite École of Port Royal. Even scientists don't always cooperate.

We hear little from London about the Royal Academy, except for some serious bickering. The monarch does support the Academy, but it's difficult to gauge the extent of its intellectual freedom. Incidentally, it's not entirely clear what Charles' own religious beliefs are. I've heard that Spinoza's correspondent, Henry Oldenburg, was imprisoned for a time in the Tower of London. No one speaks openly about it, but many assume his imprisonment was related to his contact with Spinoza.

Even in the Republic, intellectual freedom seems rather limited these days. Adriaen Koerbagh published last year Een Ligt schijnende in duystere Plaatsen (A Light Shining in Dark Places). *My cousin immediately got me a copy. We want to see if a German or Latin edition is appropriate. The book breathes the spirit of Spinoza's philosophy. And now I recently heard that Koerbagh is facing a conviction for blasphemy. I don't know if Jan van der Heijden can help him with his design for better street lighting for the city of Amsterdam. It involves over 1,800 lamps. Unfortunately, I don't believe that street lighting will contribute to the enlightenment of those who arrogantly continue to regard other people's minds as their own.*

Your devoted friend and servant,
Wolfgang Magister,

Dear and honoured friend,
Sad news coming ***from*** *the Republic. You probably heard about it too. Koerbagh was actually sentenced to ten years in the Rasphuis for blasphemy. He couldn't cope with the slavery he was forced into and died at the end of last year.*
And also sad news ***for*** *the Republic. Apparently, Charles II hasn't tired of his war mongering yet. He has concluded a secret treaty with Louis XIV against Belgium Fœderatum, as I learned from my informants.*
It's remarkable that, despite everything, interesting minds blossom in that turbulent England. Not long ago, you mentioned the talent of the young man Isaac Newton. I remind you of that other young man I spoke to you about back in time . He's almost forty now, and everyone I correspond with and who knows him sees in him the blossoming of a remarkable philosopher. John Locke is his name. It might be helpful for you to gather some information about him.
But back to France. Surgeons and physicists there are devoting themselves to peculiar experiments. I heard that Emmeretz began experimenting with blood. He tried injecting blood from a lamb into a young man. Now there are even experiments in which a pulsating blood vessel from one human is connected to a non-pulsating blood vessel from another. The King's personal physician is also involved. Yet, it seems likely to result in a conviction, and he will have to stop his experiments. Too many accidents are happening, and people are dying during the experiments.
Wolfgang, I know how much you appreciate reading François de La Mothe. Hereby I am sending you a copy of his Solliloques Sceptiques*, which he recently send to me.*

Your devoted Jacobus Schulthess.

Honoured Master and Friend,

Sad news reached us this fall. Master Ian Amos Comenius passed away in Amsterdam. Although he will live on in our hearts and minds, and although much of his work is still regularly printed or reprinted, his death nevertheless leaves a certain void within us.

Not long ago, I received his personal Ten Commandments. I can't resist translating them and sending them to you. I don't feel inclined to follow all the commandments myself. Yet, I think they testify to a peace-loving and devout person. They are the commandments of someone who is sensitive to the feelings of others and shows interest in them.

The Ten Commandments by Ian Amos Comenius

1

Don't tell everything you know; Don't believe everything you hear;
Don't wish for everything you see; Don't do everything you can,
but just do what you have to do and be careful.

2

Be modest, not indecent,
Be silent and not talkative!
When someone speaks, be silent;
when someone tells something, listen;
If someone orders you to do something, do what he wants!

3

Be kind to everyone, never violent,
keep away from flattery!

4

Above all, be just!
Ask for nothing extraordinary,
don't appropriate anything unlawfully!

5

You must be brave, diligent in your work,
leave idleness to the lazy!

6

Prosperity is not always there,
fate brings various, often sad events.
A patient man can endure that,
but a spoiled person sighs, cries and whines.

7

Be gracious and merciful too!
If anyone asks you for something, give it to him if you have it;
help the needy person if you can!

8

If someone offends you, forgive him!
If you hurt someone, comfort them!
It is good to suppress anger, forgive the guilty,
and grant forgiveness to someone who asks for it.

9

Don't be jealous of anyone, grant everyone their due.
By doing so you will earn everyone's gratitude
and you will be loved by all good people.

10

Always speak the truth, never lie!
Your devoted friend and servant,
Wolfgang Magister

Pieter

Cologne

These are once more turbulent times for several cities in the Rhine Valley as well as for *Belgium Fœderatum*. The Republic is suddenly attacked from several sides. The English and French princes, as well as the bishops of Münster and Cologne, unite against the economically prosperous provinces. At the beginning of 1672, William had offered his brother-in-law Charles to make the Republic a docile ally of England. In exchange, Charles would break with France and exert pressure to have William appointed Stadtholder. But Charles wanted to play it differently. He envisioned a major military victory, with the help of his allies. That would allow him to simply dictate the peace agreement *HE* desires. And so, 1672 became a dark year for the people of the Seven Provinces. Banks, schools, businesses, and courts closed. Many ornamental dealers and painters did not survive the financial crisis. The armies advancing from all sides sowed panic. The House of Orange now took advantage of this to finally obtain the long-desired Stadtholder-ship in Holland and Zeeland as well. The reigning royal houses, in turn, behaved rather mildly towards William. They hinted that their primary concern was avoiding a regent regime. By the end of the same year, Jan and Cornelis of the regent family De Witt were finished, with the support of the House of Orange. They were conveniently blamed for the poor state of war. The distribution of pamphlets fueled a popular uprising, which led to

a lynching of both brothers. Shortly thereafter, the Republic gained the German Emperor and the Spanish King as new allies. Meanwhile, on June 25, the first musketeer D'Artagnan was killed during the capture of Maastricht. After this capture, Louis XIV wanted to attack the Southern Netherlands from here and from the south at the same time. The French armies were wreaking havoc until William, together with the governor of *Belgium Regia* and his army of Flanders stops them. It took until the end of the 1870s for a degree of calm to return to the Rhine region.

Yet Pieter, who turned seventeen in 1673, wants to leave his parents' house for a while. For the time being, a journey like his father's, is out of the question. The rapidly shifting alliances among the ruling kings are leaving a trail of destruction across large parts of the continent. This makes travel uncertain even for the sons of wealthy burghers and nobility, let alone for Pieter. That's why Wolfgang asks his old Cologne friend Heinrich if he can temporarily take care of his son there. Pieter is delighted. Shortly after arriving in Cologne, he becomes a pupil of the 33-year-old Claudius Cardinalis, first in *Artes* and then at the Faculty of Theology. A genuine friendship quickly develops between Claudius and Pieter. Heinrich regularly accompanies them in their conversations. One evening, the friends discuss women and their right to study. Pieter recounts his parents' correspondence with gifted women. When Anna Maria Van Schurman's name is mentioned, he recounts how Voetius in time allowed her to attend classes at Utrecht University. Claudius hints that the presence of women at colleges and

universities is not uncommon. And that there are also what he calls hidden female students. “Perhaps I’ll introduce you to one of those hidden students someday,” Claudius jokes, looking at his student.

Schooling, education and upbringing are what teachers, hosts, and disciples spend most of their time discussing. Claudius explains that both preachers and priests point out the dangers of illiteracy as soon as they themselves have a good education. Moreover, these trained preachers make no distinction between the Roman Catholic and Protestant worlds. Knowledge is the ultimate tool for the salvation of children’s souls. It is the parents’ duty to care for this.

Claudius continues: “George Swinnock wrote a dozen years ago in *The Christian man’s calling: ‘*How can they know God’s will if they cannot read?’ And Richard Baxter puts it even more clearly today: ‘If it is good to hear God’s word, it is much better to read it.’ Yet, not all preachers or Puritans are unanimous in their support of literacy. Reading, yes, but with supervision. Roman Catholic priests are even more divided. Not about the duty of parents to raise their children in ‘the true faith’ but about the necessity of learning to read. They generally attach importance to education, but in morals and doctrine.

“Is it really a constant battle between those who want to generalize knowledge and science and those who want to preserve privileges and property?” asks Pieter.

“That’s the situation, with many variations. Since time immemorial, wealth and power have clouded the vision of many. To this day, stories primarily consist of battlefield heroic

deeds and the wartime exploits of victorious rulers and their armies."

"Would the anatomist, the botanist, and the astronomer then be better off portraying nature as the enemy and recounting facts as victories over nature, instead of explaining their reasoning as philosophers do?"

"That would likely be a disaster. Many peoples with whom European armies, adventurers, and missionaries came and still come into contact have a different relationship with nature than one based on possessiveness and domestication."

"But isn't the way Europeans spread God's word precisely God's will?"

"Can it be God's will to spread the word with weapons and corporal punishment? Can it be the will of a universal God that lands and peoples be taken possession of in the name of a local King?" Heinrich doubts.

"Other interests are at play here, my naive friend. Even in wartime, or perhaps especially in wartime, trade is never far away. Look at what happened to the bankrupt *Patented West India Company* in the Republic of the Seven United Provinces. It was dissolved, as befits a loss-making interest group. A new Company was re-established that same year. The charter is more limited, but the organisation continues to hold a monopoly on the profitable slave trade. Trading people like animals is, in my opinion, not God's will. The will of the powerful justifies the act, which even crept into Holy Scripture," Claudius replies.

"But that means that lust for power even affects God's word," Pieter says indignantly.

“That brings us back to our conversation about the importance of school and education, and about freedom of thought. Pieter, you definitely should talk to your father about Comenius, who died not so long ago. Also, ask him for anything he can tell you about Démia’s work. And Heinrich told me that your printing family’s library also has the writings of François de La Mothe. You won’t be short of reading material when you return home.”

About two years after this conversation, Pieter returns to his parents in Frankfurt for a short time.

Hildegarde informs him of what she’s learned from her correspondents. From Anna Maria Van Schurman, she knows that Jean de Labadie has died and that the commune is preparing to move elsewhere.

Not long ago, Hildegarde received a copy of a beautifully illustrated book about the metamorphosis of butterflies from her cousin Leopold. The work was published by a fellow printer from Nuremberg and written by his wife, Maria Sibylla Merian.

“Imagine the coincidence,” says Hildegarde. “The year your father first stayed with his cousins here in Frankfurt, Maria Sibylla was born just a few feet away. Today she lives in Nuremberg.”

Hildegarde is very enthusiastic about the book and says that she wrote to Maria Sibylla about the work of Johannes Goedaert. She points out that Maria’s book is more remarkable not only because she illustrates *metamorphosis*, but also because the entire cycle is placed in context, even the used plants and animals. She shows Maria Sibylla’s response, who speaks of her surprise when she realised that Aristotle was wrong about the

spontaneous origin of these animals from mud and dirt. She herself observed and sketched the laying of eggs. And she also succeeded in rearing caterpillars from the eggs laid by butterflies. In her *Neues Blumenbuch,* she calls a study book, not only the animals but also the plants are drawn in detail. This allows the drawings to be used, for example, as patterns for embroidery.
Hildegarde also received news from Elisabeth van Palts. She is now Abbess of Herford Abbey. She continues to correspond with other women, engaging in conversation with philosophers and physicists who generally praise her knowledge and intellect.
Pieter urges his mother to really get to work on her compilation on women in the history of ideas and science.

Wolfgang is delighted with Pieter's interest in teaching and in continuing to work on teacher training to improve the quality of the Kleine Scholen (Little schools). He asks Pieter about his beloved teacher, Claudius Cardinalis. He happily provides the texts Claudius discussed with Pieter. Pieter is surprised that his father's library also contains texts written or published only recently. Wolfgang replies with a smile that this is one of the advantages of the society he continues to run with Martin and Johannes, now that Leopold has retired from the business. Their printing society spends a great deal of time and money searching for recent translatable publications, and for this purpose, they have a whole network of colleagues, both in Europe and beyond. As an example, he shows Spinoza's two-month-old response to a letter from the Franciscan Albert Burgh, who points out his rationalist errors and disbelief in

Christ. In this answer, the philosopher says, among other things, that only by being rational one can demonstrate how improbable it sounds that, according to Roman Catholic belief, people would be deceived by the devil and condemned for eternity, while the devil himself goes free.
During the light afternoon meal that follows one of the library conversations between father and son, there's coffee for the whole family. Although it's still a rather expensive product, Wolfgang and Hildegarde have been enjoying it ever since they tasted it in the *Huis der Hoofden* and never parted with it again. At the table, Leopold tells that he heard that in *Belgium Regia* the drink was officially consumed at the castle of Freyr on the occasion of the signing of a treaty between Louis XIV and Charles II of Spain.

Shortly after Pieter turns 20, he returns to Cologne. Heinrich helps him find a place to live. He is now officially integrated into Cologne's intellectual life and regularly receives guests. One of the first guests, of course, is Claudius Cardinalis, who brings his protégée to introduce her to Pieter. Henriette Waldbaum is six years older than Pieter. As soon he hears her, the young man hangs on her every word she says. That evening, Henriette and Pieter exchange profound thoughts on how to guide children toward knowledge and science, with Claudius skilfully contributing elements.
Just a month later, Henriette and Pieter announce their marriage, something their friends hardly wonder about. A few days after the wedding, Pieter and Henriette excitedly tell Claudius that they are expecting a baby.

Henriette's pregnancy doesn't change their habit of entertaining guests. Claudius and Heinrich still often stay longer to chat.
On such an evening, Pieter asks: "Is truth what hasn't been forgotten? Is truth what escapes oblivion?"
"Or is truth knowledge and science, and therefore reality?" asks Henriette.
"Truth can also be what has not remained hidden," says Pieter.
"Of course, something can first be hidden, and then become *unhidden* through knowledge and science," Heinrich notes.
"Then truth can become untruth. Like with Maria Sibylla's butterflies," Pieter observes.
"What do you mean?"
"At first, the truth seemed to be that caterpillars and worm-like creatures emerged from mud, soil, and dirt. And now the truth seems to be that they hatch from eggs laid by butterflies and other bloodless creatures," Pieter explains.
"So you're saying that truth comes from knowledge and science. Something isn't hidden, or no longer hidden, and becomes true. For how long?" asks Heinrich. "As long as it's not forgotten?"
"But false things aren't necessarily forgotten. Aristotle's claim that larvae come from mud and dirt is false according to today's metamorphologists, but it hasn't been forgotten. Are both claims true? Can something in nature be true for some people and false for others?" Henriette teases.
"For the Greeks, it was apparently simple. Alethea, goddess of the *unhidden*, is therefore the goddess of *truth*. But something is only unhidden if you look at it and accept that you might have looked at it wrong," Claudius joins the conversation.

“What do you mean by this, Claudius?”
“I thought of what Galileo wrote over eighty years ago when he was unsure how to talk about his findings. He wrote then: ‘many, after reading my work, will not check exactly whether what I say is true and change their minds, but only look for how they can, rightly or wrongly, undermine my arguments’.”
“With all due respect and consideration I have for Comenius, he argues that the school depends on mathetics, the science of learning and didactics, the science of teaching. Science in the sense of skill or art. Yet, in his work, he primarily focuses on the skill of teaching. Can’t he, with his knowledge, make mathetics more openly visible?” Pieter retorts.
“I think I understand what you mean. When Comenius says that a child cannot be instructed when it is still too young, just as it is not good advice to instruct an adult or elderly person, he is talking about the art of teaching, not the art of learning. But then he does say that the beginning of a person’s formation must take place during their spring, during childhood,” says Henriette.
“And I think such an argument hides the reality of the art of learning and focuses more attention on the truth about the art of teaching.”
“So you have reservations about the *Didactica Magna*?”
“I have reservations about much of what I read.”
“Do you do that when you read Descartes too? Is *Res Cogitans* the consequence of the student’s educational discipline? That would turn the school into a ‘place of construction for people’, and that seems very deterministic to me,” says Claudius.

"And learning to reason is more of an observational process, an experimentation, than a rule-based process? Is that what you're saying?" Henriette interjects.

"A process of observation and a process of decision-making, but in the sense of the example that Claudius gave about Galileo. You know as well as I do that Comenius in *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* clearly advocates Ptolemy's system. He uses the mathematical description published by Tycho Brahe in 1588. I believe Comenius may have discussed this with Picard, who traveled extensively throughout Europe in the 1550s.

"And is it possible to have a *Orbis Pictus* to think of where the different points of view are placed side by side? Not ***either or***, but ***and, and***, an incentive to keep searching for answers? Comenius would probably not have accepted it, as would most bishops of any Christian persuasion, for that matter." Henriette looks frolicsome at Claudius.

"Yes, and not just bishops," he replies with a wink at Henriette.

"Consider Voetius' views. According to him, innovations in the natural sciences and philosophy leeds to atheism, and he couldn't accept that. He rejected any doctrine that held that the Earth revolves around the Sun and opposed René Descartes for rejecting Aristotle. He died not long ago, and until his death, he also opposed Spinoza and his followers, and not just because their concept of God differed from his own."

"I think we'll come back to this often, my dear," Henriette says to Pieter. "And I think we may need to clarify regarding the connection between didactics and mathetics, but also regarding scholasticism and dialectics, which I consider to be opponents."

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In 1677, Emperor Leopold recognises the *Academia Naturae Curiosorum* that is now sometimes referred to as 'the Leopoldina'. So the Royal Academy phenomenon is expanding.
Pieter learns from the Amsterdam correspondents that Spinoza has died in The Hague. According to his friends, he had long been suffering from phthisis.
In the spring of the following year Anna Maria van Schurman also died. She spent her final years in Wieuwerd, in the stins occupied by part of the Labadist commune.
Shortly before this, Henriette and Pieter's second son was born. At Claudius' suggestion, he was given the name John.

In 1680 Pieter decides to officially change his name from Magister to Lesmeister. This is the result of conversations about the use of the vernacular in education. He explained his intentions to his parents and Henriette who see no problem with the name change. They think it is rather pointless, but if Pieter is happy with it…
Meanwhile, Claudius prepares for a rather long stay outside Cologne. He is summoned to Rome. Shortly before his departure, Henriette and Pieter speak to him about this.
"So you're going to Rome?"
"I was called. There are church matters in the Rhineland and surrounding areas that require our attention. I think it wiser to discuss this directly with the Roman Curia than to initiate a rather slow correspondence that leaves many gaps for misinterpretation."

“But aren’t you also very much needed here? Among the priests and teachers who cultivate ignorance, there are many who do so partly unconsciously. Your lectures are appreciated. You have authority, and your friendly approach makes people truly reflect on the role they perform.”

“My dear and esteemed friends, We now have a pious Pope with an austere lifestyle and I would like to use this opportunity to talk about school and education. Innocent XI paints an image of him as one who wants to live a pure life, without pomp and circumstance. Through his austere and pious style, he not only lives far from the people but paradoxically also endangers his friend Miguel de Molinos. Regardless of Molinos’ mysticism, which could potentially be criticised, his gentleness and kindness contrast sharply with the arrogance of those who would prefer to condemn him as a heretic. The Jesuits seem to be doing their best to portray him in a bad light. At the same time, with their casuistry, they develop an argumentation that ultimately allows you to dismiss the entire Christian morality if you can argue arrogantly enough. And I personally see that as a further step in the growing divide between the school for the poor and the school for the wealthy and noble.”

“But the great difference between the school of knowledge and the school of moral education through obligation is not limited to the Roman Catholic world,” Henriette ventures.

No. We have plenty of examples of how those who want to influence and compel the people to commit themselves often combine worldly and spiritual power. This is the case when the ruler imposes the Reformed Church, the Anglican Church, or

Calvinism. In the Little School, one often limits oneself to reading selected texts. The rulers of the Muslim world do much the same. On the one hand, you see how thoroughly astronomy, mathematics, anatomy, and the general knowledge of nature are addressed at their colleges. On the other hand, for them too, the little school called the madrassa is, for the common people, simply a school of moral education for obligatory purposes. Just as with us, memorising the sacred texts is often the sole purpose."

"But when I attended your lectures, you still talked about the elegance of the *sifr* and ciphering compared to the slow work on the abacus when numbers have to be processed. And you even mentioned Gerbert or Sylvester II, who studied in the Caliphate of Cordoba."

"My dear friend, that was over 600 years ago. Schools certainly weren't like they are today, and literacy was even more reserved for a small segment of the population. You can talk about the wise and learned of an empire or a 'civilisation', but that doesn't mean the entire population of that empire was wise or learned. Even when the leaders of that empire claim this, it's simply a lie. You can rightly say that after the decline of 'Roman civilisation', which relied on Greek scholars, the Carolingian period was a new golden age for science and art, but that doesn't mean that everyone living within the borders of that empire suddenly became literate and learned.

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Dear Claudius,

We don't know each other personally, but thanks to my son

Pieter, it seems like we've been corresponding for a long time. Let me just say that I'm very pleased with the way you're maintaining a dialogue with Pieter and Henriette about teacher training.

Pieter recently wrote to me about your conversation about the Little School. I think we're seeing a recurring pattern. Gradually parents are increasingly obligated to send their children to the Little School. This guarantees that they receive a moral and religious education according to the rules of their place of residence. It seems that princes, clergy, and patricians found the school to be the instrument to ensure that serfs don't become serfs. If this is indeed the case, then I fear that training teachers for the Little School, well-versed in science and art, will be an impossible dream. Great minds like Erasmus, Descartes, and the much-too-young deceased Pascal describe the importance of one's own reasoning. Is it perhaps precisely for this reason that people want to deny the art of reasoning to the people? The Little School is underpinned by scholasticism. No questioning reasoning is possible, only the posing of questions to obtain established answers that have been dogmatically validated. Even the mathetics that Comenius discusses is subjected by Comenius himself to the interpretation of the universe that is considered dogmatically correct.

But the poor knowledge and scholarship of the master of the Little School poses other dangers. It certainly fosters aggression towards other peoples. I am convinced that learning to read without the necessary learning to think for oneself about what one reads is like lighting a fuse in a powder keg. And the powder keg is the cheap printing. I recently received a copy of Poor Robins's Character of a

Dutchman. *I'm adding it here. In this booklet you can read, among other things:* 'Those who have seen my observations and predictions which I made upon the blazing star of comet that appeared in December 1662, may there find what direful effects I presaged would ensue thereupon, especially to Zealand Holland and the rest of the United Provinces whose tail tended directly towards them, for such warnings questionings come not in vain; and though we cannot excuse our selves from many and grievous sins, yet such monstrous ingratitude as the Hollanders have shown to the English, such bloody and inhumane butcheries committed by them against us, at Amboyna, Pelaroon, and other places in the East Indies, such insolence at sea, and ingratitude by land must needs cry aloud for vengeance'.

This seems to me to set the tone for tarring all inhabitants of the Republic with the same brush. This fosters hate-driven sentiments. According to the author, you can't argue with the generally proverbial drunken Dutch. 'To persuade a Dutch Man to thankfulness is almost as hard as to dissuade him from his dearest delight, Brandy. This their so great inebriation doused as I conceive our English Proverb when they see a man sidled to say he is as drunk as a Dutch Man'*, the text continues.*

The author then admits that both the English and the Dutch exhibit strange behaviour, but, he immediately adds, that the English ones are harmless.

'English go always to chimney corner even weather is hot; by hearing a clock he ask next to him what is a clock. As the other remains quit, the two do not know. Harmless.

But Dutch! Whatever you say, they forget, the first thing they ask for in the mornings is a Brandy. Dutch is like an

otter. He drinks and offers up his devotions to a pickled herring, nineteen arguments to say it is the rarest dish in the world.'

And then it becomes clear that you shouldn't fear these kinds of people. They've made themselves hateful and are therefore better off being fought courageously: 'Dread not those men whose high ingratitude hath justly made them odious to all sorts of people who have but the least pretensions to honesty. Go on bravely, fight valiantly and never fear but to com off victoriously'.

This cheap print, which, more quickly than great scientific or philosophical works, reaches the hands of those on a shoestring, can only have dangerous consequences for those who haven't learned to think about what they read and have had little or no travel experience. I recall Descartes's words that traveling is like talking to someone from another age. That it is good to know something about the customs and habits of others in order to form a more accurate judgment of our own. That it is good not to think that everything that differs from our customs is ridiculous, as those who have never seen anything different tend to do. Of course, this also reminds me of François de La Mothe's statements when he talks about the Common sense. *I'm afraid that* Omnes Omnia Omnino *will be of no use if teachers don't receive training that prevents narrow-mindedness. And who, dear Claudius, would be interested in providing such training? Not the Jesuits, I think. But who would? I don't see anyone at the moment. I would be pleased to hear your opinion on this sometime. In the meantime, know that you always have a bed at our place in Frankfurt.*

Completely yours,

Wolfgang Magister.

Little remains to be said about Wolfgang, Hildegarde, Pieter, and Henriette in the following years. Both families pursued their occupations, which included research, writing, and teaching. Through Wolfgang, Pieter received a message from Martin Scharff in Mainz that compulsory school attendance had been introduced. Wolfgang added a comment that, in his view, this compulsory school attendance confirmed the rulers' attempt to force all subjects to adhere to official moral and religious guidelines.

The winter of 1683-1684 was the coldest in Europe in living memory. *Central England Temperature* recorded since 1658, establishes for the first time an average temperature over the entire winter that is below the freezing point of water.
Frost sets in six weeks before Christmas, after which all the major rivers freeze over. In January, the Thames is completely frozen, reaching an ice thickness of 11 inches by mid-February. In Antwerp, the entire Scheldt is closed. The Rhine is an ice sheet. On January 2nd, the coast of *Belgium Regia* frozen up to two miles from the coastline. Brussels reports that businesses have closed and that people are dying in the streets from the cold.

On February 6, 1685, James II became king of England. He aimed for an absolute monarchy following the example of his cousin Louis XIV. Both were Roman Catholic. The French monarch was advised to end the relative tolerance towards non-Roman Catholic Christians. He therefore revoked the Edict of

Nantes with the Edict of Fontainebleau. Not only were Huguenots undesirable, but pressure was also brought to bear on Jansenists and other groups who did not strictly adhere to the king and his court. But if the monarch's advisors had hoped for a better relationship with Pope Innocent XI, they were disappointed. The exodus of dissenters, meanwhile, did not benefit the economy, art, science, and culture. Among the exiles was the philosopher Pierre Bayle, who advocated religious tolerance. He lost his teaching position in France not only for championing virtuous atheists, but also for advocating a certain separation of church and state. Although he didn't question absolutism per se, he was nevertheless labeled an underminer of authority because he argued that one can be a good and loyal subject regardless of one's personal faith. He emigrated to Rotterdam.

James didn't remain in power in England for long. Barely three years after his accession, his son-in-law William III of Nassau invaded England, deposing his father-in-law and ruling England jointly with his wife, Mary Stuart. Shortly thereafter, William and Mary became not only king and queen of England, but also of Scotland and Ireland. Merchants and bankers, seeing new opportunities, left the Dutch Republic to settle in London.

In Southeastern and Northeastern Europe, from 1684 onward, several Christian royal houses united their armies in the Holy League, after which they waged war against the Ottoman Empire. This led to the Treaty of Karlowitz. The Ottoman Empire stagnated and declined more due to the incompetence of its own leaders than to the existence of competent leaders

within the Holy League.

In 1686 the *Congregatio Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis* vigorously pursues the transatlantic slave trade. This happens after hearing the testimony of Lourenço da Silva de Mendouça, grandson of King Ngola Hari of Ndongo, who was exiled to Brazil by the Portuguese in 1671 because his father broke the vassalage to Portugal. With the help of Capuchin missionaries, he convinces the cardinals of the inhuman nature of slavery, which, contrary to European claims, is not ended by conversion.
Wolfgang and Pieter learn this from Claudius Cardinalis. Although Claudius points out that the Church itself has little direct influence on the Spanish and Portuguese slaveholders and traders, and none at all on the traders over England and the Dutch Republic, father and son are nevertheless delighted. Wolfgang mentions it in one of his letters to Pieter. He says this is a clear sign that God's spirit is visiting God's house on Earth.
In the same letter, Wolfgang expresses his satisfaction with the state of affairs in the scientific world. The German Academy under Leopold's patronage is renamed *Sacri Romani Imperii Academia Caesareo-Leopoldina Naturae Curiosorum*. This means that the institution covers the entire German Empire.
A groundbreaking work is published in London. Isaac Newton publishes *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* and in it his draft of the Theory of Gravitation. Wolfgang notes that Newton could see further than Galileo. After all, Galileo had in his work *De Motu Antiquiora* demonstrate that he couldn't understand why a falling object accelerates. Wolfgang thinks Galileo probably wouldn't even accept Newton's mathematical

explanation. It holds that there's a general principle that bodies fall toward each other in proportion to their weight and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. Galileo might have rejected this because it was too suggestive of occult forces, something he deeply disliked.

Round table conversations

"I have never seen John sit at the table for so long as during these last days," laughs Henriette.

"But Mother, you've never told such exciting stories as since we've been staying with Grandma and Grandpa," the boy remarks. "You've experienced a lot and met quite a few remarkable people." He quickly adds, "I consider it a great honor that I've been sitting opposite such a remarkable person for a few days now."

Claudius, Pieter and Henriette laugh heartily.

"You are a charmer, my young friend," says Claudius.

"Can't every young person be a charmer?" asks Pieter. "Isn't it through the example of the adults around them that children develop?"

"So," Henriette teases, "John would be a charmer, because you or I are too."

Hildegarde laughs. "What I learned with Wolfgang is that young people indeed carry a lot within them as a result of what they experience in their immediate environment."

"Then would the children of villagers and poor city dwellers be looked down upon just because their parents were treated down?" asks Pieter. "That's almost the same as the

predestination arguments. Only divine approval is missing."
"Predestination is a dangerous concept, easily abused by misanthropes," Claudius believes. "Fortunately, not everyone looks down on the children of the poor, though they usually do with selective eyes. Even from the lower classes, remarkable people emerge. Think of that English physicist Isaac Newton. He seems to have been a farmer's son from a rural hamlet."
"But he comes from rather wealthy parents," Wolfgang counters. "He's not the son of poor wretches who barely have enough to keep from starving."
"To get back to predestination," says Henriette. "Pieter and I have been closely following education in the South of France since Claudius introduced us to the work of Charles Démia, who died last year. There are currently sixteen charity schools in Lyon that accept boys or girls. The Vincentians and the Brothers of the Christian Schools are expanding these kinds of schools for the poorest families to other cities. At first glance, this seems like a good thing for literacy among the poor. But to allow the children to work during the week, the schools are often only open on Sundays. On that day, they limit themselves to lessons in Catholic morality and religious education."
"And is it different in those areas where the Roman Catholic Church does not have a say?" asks Hildegarde.
"Since Hus, but especially since Luther, there has been this idea that the reformers were the ones who encouraged people to learn to read," says Claudius. "That may be partly true, but in my opinion, it's certainly not a universal phenomenon. Religious orientation may have played a role for a short time. However,

everywhere, a child's background is much more decisive for the education they receive. The family plays a role in this, but especially the way the nobility and clergy view the common people. Those who are well-off in wealth and descent separate themselves from the poor. And, not to mention compassion, religion has little influence on this."

Wolfgang notes: "In any case, everything that the school in *Belgium Fœderatum* teaches as determined by the church. This was already the case in Catholic times, when in parish schools, a priest or sexton taught children the rudiments of religion and taught them some reading, and sometimes even writing. After the Reformation, these schools continued to exist, with only the content of religious instruction changing. New textbooks were introduced, and the Roman Catholic teachers were replaced by people '*of the true religion*'. In some places, such as Utrecht, that transition took quite some time, but now all schools have been Reformed for almost half a century."

"Father has always told me that during his travels, he saw a huge difference in education for children and young people, not only because of their background but also because of their place of birth. What's it like in the world we, here at this table, have never personally visited? Do we know anything about how children and young people are treated there?" asks Pieter.

"A newborn child has to learn everything. I hear that a lot," says Claudius. "Some claim that play helps children learn, just as young dogs and cats learn to hunt their prey through play. It's simply a matter of proper imprinting for a creature that, although still small, already has everything it needs to be an

adult. But sometimes I hear voices say that children have their own way of thinking and that imprinting alone isn't enough."
"We were all children ourselves at one time. If we had our own way of thinking, we would remember it," Hildegarde observes.
Claudius says: "Descartes speaks of a rupture. First, you are a child. You become human when you can break away from childish errors, misconceptions, and prejudices. Seen in this light, moral and religious education is a logical consequence. Even those who condemn Descartes must admit this. Dogmatic arrogance can, however, lead to a very simple instructional goal. That is to replace childish prejudice with an imposed group prejudice. The school for the poor can provide this. For Comenius, childhood is the truth of humanity. We will become human, he said, when we reclaim the purity and innocence of existence itself. This can happen by freeing ourselves from the dark world of ignorance and barbarism. Seen in this light, the division of schools, on the one hand, for the poor and on the other, for the rich, is wrong. We only need a school that helps us cast off ignorance and barbarism."
"Less than a century ago, Pierre de Bérulle said that, with the exception of death, childhood is the vilest and most contemptible state of human nature," Wolfgang notes. "By contrast, Comenius maintains that there is nothing higher or more adorable than the child, for it is the undistorted image of God, original sin aside."
"It's a pity that Pelagius lost out to Augustine. It might have given the children a different history. But it would have damaged the idea of the father figure and therefore the whole

idea of hierarchy in both the secular and the spiritual world," Claudius believes.

"Can you explain that a little better?" asks Pieter.

"It is absolutely presumptuous to burden children with original sin. Even Comenius preserves the condition of original sin at birth. Pelagius was a respected and learned monk over a thousand years ago who assumed that humans possess full free will. Somewhere between the third and fourth century, he wrote that there is no such thing as original sin. According to him, children are as innocent at birth as Adam in Paradise. Good is ultimately rewarded and evil is punished. For humans, it only matters to live virtuously. And God helps humanity in this by giving us the Law in the Old Testament and the example of Jesus in the New. Initially, Pelagius was seen as the voice of the church. But when he points out inconsistencies to a changing Augustine by citing his own writings, he is practically labeled a heretic, and everything he ever said is suddenly suspect. Pelagius was deposed, and Augustine is today a pillar, not only for the Roman Catholic Church, but for virtually all Christian movements. The way this shift occurred, I think, makes us reflect on the collective will of adults to suppress and suppress the child within us."

"May I repeat my previous question now? What about children's education in different parts of the world?" Pieter asks.

"First, a quick note. In Roman Catholic Europe, more and more children are having access to the Little School. This doesn't mean there's a lot of writing. When I was in Rome, I learned that in France, 29 out of every 100 men and 14 out of every 100

women sign on the day they marry. Of course, we only know this if we have a marriage register. That figure is considerably lower in northern France. Fewer people are also writing in Spain, and I've received the same report from England. The Little Schools are only starting up now under the influence of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Instruction.

After the meal, Henriette and Hildegarde go to the library. They want to review and compare their correspondence. They organize what they both know about the role of women in religion and the sciences. Accompanied by his eldest grandson, Wolfgang goes to the printing house to find Leopold. Leopold wants to discuss with him what part of Newton's work could possibly be translated into German. They assume that not only scholars have the right to know Newton's ideas. A small German or bilingual edition of the essentials would be useful for people who, although they can read, are more proficient in their own language than in Latin. Now that the publication of Almanacs has proven to be such a success, Leopold is receptive to Johannes' proposal to publish other small books with more scientific information. After all, truly scientific journals publish primarily in Latin. Small books in their own language might interest Almanac readers.

Claudius, Pieter, and John sit in the courtyard to continue their conversation about child rearing.

"And what about the colonies? Do we know anything about this?" asks Pieter. He knows that Claudius maintained contacts not only with Catholic colleagues but also with non-Roman bishops. He also supposedly exchanged letters with philosophers

from the East, and even with Islamic theologians. But no one knows if that's actually true. These could be rumours spread by someone. Bishop *in partibus infidelium* Claudius Cardinalis would like to see condemned as a heretic…

"I don't know much about the West Indies and Terra Americi yet. In the East Indies there is the older Roman influence now also that of *Belgium Fœderatum* as a result of the expansion of the Dutch East India Company. In all places, the only concern, you could say, is to provide religious education with a view to evangelisation.

Claudius then reviews his rather sparse information. Initially, the Dutch in Batavia had only incompetent teachers, corrupted by alcohol. This improved only slowly. The main task was to build a barrier against other religions and the practices of the Chinese population. The Church Council knew there was a serious shortage of schoolbooks. Nowadays, besides the large ABC book, you can find the catechism, the *Historiën van Tobias* and many psalm books. Meanwhile, a more select group of students can attend the Latin School. Here, Vossius's work is primarily used. And Comenius' *Didactica Magna* is known.

Formosa has an equivalent dubious beginning as to that of Batavia. The governor there says of the teachers they are generally literate. But until 1650, there were many complaints about the indecent lives they led. Today, the government requires a religious examination for teachers. But Claudius recently learned that much remains to be done. The native catechists are accused of everything from drunkenness and prostitution to theft. Here, too, a somewhat better school seems

to exist only for the elite. The better schools today use the Amsterdam edition of *Didactica Magna*. The Latin school of Sinckan mentions *Vestibulum* and *Janua Linguarum Reserata* as a schoolbooks.

In Ambon, in the Molucas, the Republic adopted the structure established by the Portuguese. All the information paints much the same picture. Until the early 70's, there was little real change in religious education. According to information from the Church Council, the one-horse-towns had very poorly prepared black schoolmasters. A head schoolmaster was appointed as a kind of supervisor.

For the Banda Islands the government *Belgium Fœderatum* followed a peculiar policy. Europeans with '*dishonourable practices and bad morals*' were sent there to replenish the slave population. Thirty years later, school supplies were delivered, but only when increasing complaints arose about the lifestyle of the "riffraff" living there.

The Malabar coast has a fairly good Little school, even with the beginnings of a kind of Latin School. This primarily serves the children of married soldiers residing there. The *Toepassen, descendants* of Malabar and Portuguese have been admitted. The intention is to convert them. There are some problems with one or other bad teacher, but today more than sixty children attend school.

Initially, such enthusiastic reports emerged about Ceylon that even the government had doubts. In 1671, there were reports of 14,000 children attending school in the Colombo region, while the total Christian population at the time was around 20,000. In

the Tamil region, these figures were even higher. However, figures from the Church Council indicate that in the early 80s, a total of approximately 3,800 children attended school here. These initial, very optimistic figures did, however, ensure the success of Cats' venture to establish a Latin school for poor children and Dutch orphans, as well as for children from Ceylon itself. Today, there is a teacher training college in Ceylon. It primarily uses a richly illustrated version of *Janua Linguarum Reserata* with the translation *The Door of Languages Unlocked* in Dutch and of the *Januae Linguarum Vestibulum* both by Comenius of course.

And then there is the southern tip of Africa. During the conquest of the Cape of Good Hope, the *Dutch East India Company* encountered the Khoikhoi, a pastoralist people named *Hottentot* by the occupiers. Many of them serve as cattle herders for the *Company* or as stable keepers.

After hearing about the Heeren Zeventien (*Lords Seventeen's are those in charge of the Dutch East India Company)* attitude, Claudius speaks of a typical Pontius Pilate attitude. While enslaving the local population is prohibited, importing slaves from other places is permissible. In 1658, Pieter van Stael established a school for the children of these imported slaves. Khoikhoi children were soon permitted to attend the school as well, and by 1663, even white children were allowed to attend. The curriculum consisted of religious instruction and Statenbijbel-Nederlands (Dutch of the official Staten Bible). When Emestus Back succeeded Pieter van Stael, a turning point quickly occurred. Wealthier white parents were now required to

pay school fees. Slave children and indigenous children were exempt. From 1685 onward, the slave children attended separate schools for boys and girls. Shortly after this conversation, Claudius learned that widow Aagje Keyser was establishing a school at the Cape for children under seven.

"In general," Claudius concludes his overview, "schools in the East Indies have only been truly regulated for about five years. The Council of the Indies and the Church Council agreed that schools must have a license from the city council. The Church Council examines teachers before they start working. They must be able to read, write neatly, sing psalms, and calculate properly. The schools are inspected bi-annually. Instruction must be in Dutch. The book selection generally consists of ABC books, *Letterconsten*, *Kort Begrip* and the Heidelberg Catechism."

"You only spoke about the slaves at the Cape of Good Hope," says Pieter. "Do you know more about slave upbringing?"

"I know little about this and I only have indirect information. As far as I could find out, the Church Council claims the separation of slave children from other children in other *Belgium Fœderatum* controlled areas taken over from the Portuguese, for whom this was common practice. As early as 1625, a separate school for Malabar slave children was taught by Marigno Francisco. According to the scribe at the time, these were children of non-Christians who did not maintain strict family ties. The Black Portuguese-speaking slave teachers generally earned only a fifth of what the white teachers earned. In Batavia, from 1643 onwards, the Church Council itself took the initiative to maintain a separate school for the Company's serfs

or for sick slaves. There were only religious lessons. Three mornings a week were devoted to learning to recite prayers and the catechism. Therefore are mainly used the *Haneboek* and *Kort Begrip* by Faukelius. There is even a Portuguese translation of the latter specifically for slaves and serfs. Also popular is the dutch *The history of the old Tobias, and of his son the young Tobias, full of beautiful lessons.* And I know nothing more at the moment," Claudius concludes.
At this point the three of them stand up and walk out of the gate for a short walk around the city before dinner is served.

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"*Topinamboer* of *papas peruanorum?*" asks Hildegarde, before the dish of meat is passed around. Everyone present wants to try both tubers. Everyone helped themselves.
The conversation pauses for a moment while Claudius leads the short prayer of thanksgiving.
They are very excited about the *topinamboer*. The *papas* are indeed somewhat less flavourful, but you can absorb the meat juices better with it than with the hard, dry rye bread.
"Could tubers with such names ever become attractive in our region?" John jokes.
"Someone already says sweet potato," says Claudius. "The Spaniards in Rome say *potato* for both tubers, and that word was readily adopted by other languages. But if you ask for sweet potato on your plate in Rome, you never know whether you'll get the sweet or the bland version," he adds.
"You can easily see the difference. The sweet tuber is a darker yellow or light orange. The other tuber is more white or white-

yellow," Pieter notes.

Then Henriette says: "Hildegarde and I worked all afternoon yesterday on letters for Anna Maria Schurman, Elisabeth van Palts and Maria Sibylla Merian. We went through the part of the *Didactica Magna* where Comenius discusses the education of girls. We agree that Ian Amos defends the education of all girls, not just those from the nobility or patricians. But the instruction he deems necessary is primarily intended to prepare good mothers. They will be able to provide the right education for their children before they enter the Little School. Looking for those who defend women's intellectual activity are much harder to find."

"You won't easily find testimonies defending intellectual equality between men and women in the Christian world," Claudius believes. "If I may give you a hint, look up some of the history of the Beguines. Try talking to some women who chose the Beguine life. You're sure to find some interesting craftswomen and intellectuals among them."

"The entire Christian world makes women dependent on men," says Henriette. "Isn't that the case with the Beguines?"

"As with many topics that lead theologians back to Genesis in the Old Testament, the positions are very ambivalent. Not only among Jews and Christians, but also among the followers of Muhammad," Claudius replies.

"Hasn't La Peyère already demonstrated that humans existed before Genesis? He's talking about the preAdamites, the tribes that lived before Adam's creation. According to him, that must be the case. Where else would all those tribes come from that

were already living in the West and East Indies before the colonists arrived? And the wives of Adam's sons, where did they come from? Were they also created from Adam? Or were they converted sisters of Lilith? And were the wives of the preAdamites also there simply to keep the already created men company?" asks Wolfgang.

"Oh, my friend," Claudius replies. "You're formulating an even more dangerous idea here than Comenius about education and training. But, although your mockery is both venomous and superficial, I can agree with you that La Peyère was a difficult bird for any church hierarchy and any Abrahamic religion. Anyone who wants to maintain the universality of the Fall and original sin must establish all humans as descended from Adam. There are a growing number of scholars who believe that La Peyère is correct in at least one respect: human history is perhaps older than what you can deduce from the Bible if you count back generations."

"Where are the women in all this?" asks Hildegarde.

"I think that here God's will is opposed to man's word," sighs Claudius. "I'm currently trying to get my hands on everything the philosopher Zera or Zara Yacob of Abyssinia writes. He has an extremely interesting view of faith and religion. He writes about women differently than most European philosophers and theologians do. For him, women are the philosopher's intellectual partners. About Hirut, his own partner, he writes that she isn't very beautiful but has a good nature, is intelligent, and patient. He cherishes her intelligence and basks in hers."

"May I interpret your sigh for a moment?" asks Henriette. "I

think you are right when you say that it is not God but men who shun women. I learned from one of my English correspondents that it has been possible for a girl in England for some time now to enrol the *Grammar School*. Yet many schools simply don't admit them. There are exceptions. In Rivington, for example, a total of 13 girls studied in 1681. But parents generally believe that mixed education endangers their daughters' chastity. That was apparently less of a problem a hundred years ago, although there have always been teachers who oppose mixed education. And the French colleagues of our dear and critical friend here are openly campaigning against mixed education in the name of morality in any school. This often means the banishment of the girls, even from the little school. In many places, there is no girls' school available.
"That is why your advice to talk to the Beguines seems like a good advice to us," Hildegarde concludes.

At the time of Claudius birth, it was quite common for his eldest brother to be educated for secular duties, including the management of lands and the goods passing undivided into his hands through inheritance. Claudius' task was to ascend as high as possible in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. After the first letter Wolfgang exchanged with Claudius, the former remembered seeing little Claus in a Latin school, poring over a difficult Latin grammar. Meanwhile, after he had become a *Bisschop in partibus infidelium* after being ordained, he definitively adopted the name Claudius Cardinalis. Under that name, he later lived and studied in Rome for almost ten years. It is perhaps ironic that it was precisely his ordination as a bishop in the Roman

Catholic Church that drove him away from that church. This ordination gave him more opportunities for reading and travel. Claudius says that Rome is the ideal place to become acquainted with dangerous ideas. Besides those of Comenius, he studied others there. Perhaps that is why he now also feels dangerous thoughts arising within himself. He cannot help but increasingly invoke the ideas of those the church hierarchy suspects of heresy. He is acutely aware that as soon as he hears of a work on the list of banned books, he wants to read it too. Gradually, he considers his own religion, as well as that of others, a local phenomenon. For Claudius, God is indeed omnipresent and universal, but it seems impossible to him that his worship can lie in the hands of a single universal church. The illusion of universality is related to the will of arrogant rulers. They consider their own service and therefore their own experience of God, in which they themselves are at the top of the worldly hierarchy, as more important and—oh! dangerous word—more correct than that of everyone else. According to Claudius, anyone who entertains such arrogant human thoughts is far removed from the concept of *connectedness in diversity* typical of the universe and creation itself.

Claudius read with great interest the book of preacher Abraham Rogerius the *De Open-Deure Tot het Verborgen Heydendom Ofte Waerachtigh vertoogh van het Leven ende Zeden, mitsgaders de Religie ende Godsdienst der Bramines op de Cust Chormandel ende der Landen [The Open Door to Hidden Heath Or a True Discourse on the Life and Morals, as well as the Religion and Faith of the Brahmins on the Cust Chormandel and the Countries*

thereabouts]. In this 1651 book, Rogerius describes the ethics, morals, and religious beliefs of the original inhabitants of areas first occupied by the Portuguese and now by the Dutch. The book was quickly translated into German and French. Reading it reinforces Claudius' idea that only arrogant, ignorant, or dishonest people who prioritise their own power and profit destroy the diversity of approaches to the relationship between God and humanity. According to Claudius, one of Rogerius' merits is that he conversed with the Bramines in a language they were proficient in, and above all, he listened. It seems like a practical application of one of Comenius' Ten Commandments. Claudius also finds this to support Spinoza's words that God's presence is proven not by miracles but by the order in nature. And nature, in this case, is diversity. Claudius fully agrees that miracles are an indication of human ignorance. Claudius also believes that free will is more than just the impetus for an unexplained action resulting from ignorance. One of his dreams is to expand the universal Christianity of the Collegiants into a universal spiritual experience of the Divine. He appreciates the Collegiants' relativisation of dogma and theology and the opportunity to speak freely during their monthly lectures.

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"It is true, then, that Descartes was set on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* by Clement X and Innocent XI and that Alexander VIII did not change it," says Pieter.

It is more correct to say that the *Sacred Congregation of the Index* maintains and updates the list of banned books. But then again, most of what Descartes wrote has been banned for 25 years. It's

on the index *donec corrigator*" Claudius notes.
"*Corrigator*… make it right is actually an invitation to falsification," Hildegarde believes. "It is the unilateral demand to align the ideas of anyone with what is considered right by those who hold ecclesiastical power, even if that rightness is falsity."
"You could put things in that way, yes," Claudius agrees.
"But limits the *Index* itself with matters of faith?" asks John.
"Of course, since Trent, the religious dispute has been a major reason for putting books on the banned list. But it's not the only reason. One can hardly argue that René Descartes was ever a Lutheran or a Calvinist."
"If I remember correctly, Descartes' works were only set on the *Index* after his death." Wolfgang notes.
"On the index of 1681 I found the entry 'until it is right' *Meditationes de prima philosophia, in quibus Dei existentia et anima humana a corpore distinctio demonstrantur; In Belgio editum cum hoc titulo: Explicatio mentis humana sive anima rationalis* en *Opera philosophica*. Furthermore, the Latin version of Les passions de l'âme (*(Passiones anima. Gallice ab auctore conscripta, nunc autem latina civitate donata*)) on the list. Also included are two letters: one to the provincial governor of the Jesuits in France and one to Gisbert Voetius in which Descartes discusses two of his books."
"Until it's right?" asks John.
"Yes, on the *Index* there are many texts which, according to the Sacred Congregation, should be forbidden until the content is correct, or until certain parts of the books are erased. *Donec corrigator* is often supplemented with *Donec expurgentur.* In that

case, books are mutilated. Entire chapters and addenda often have to disappear to remove a book from the list. *De algemene academische Leuvense studies van Fasti [The general academic Leuven studies of Fasti]* has to be corrected, but the works in which Erasmus discusses religion must be partly erased."

"Because they are written in Flemish?" asks Henriette.

"No, those two titles are in Latin. But it is indeed true that some works are banned simply because they use the vernacular or because the author is considered a heretic. For example, you will find on the list the *Christelycke Leeringhen* divided into various songbooks, very useful for the elderly and children. Issued by a lover of the Catechism, to be used in the self. (*Christian doctrina plures in cantiones divisa, valde utilis pro parentibus, eorumque filiis, edita per amatorem catechisms, ut illis sit usui*) and *Comparaison de l'Évangile du pape avec l'Évangile de Jésus touchant la rémission des péchéz et la consécution de la vie éternelle*," Claudius continues. "Anyone who defends someone who is considered a critic or an apostate by the Sacred Congregation will naturally also be included in the index. Just think of the text of Blanc-Mont, who defends Jean de Labadie in *Première apologie pour Jean de Labadie et pour la justice de sa déclaration*. A text like *Réflexions sur la cruelle persécution que souffre l'église réformée de France, et sur la conduite et les actes de la dernière assemblée du clergé de ce royaume* is of course unacceptable. And whoever research on the rules of the Index cannot avoid to be listed on that same *Index*. I think here of the work of Daniel Fancus, *Disquisitio academica de papistarum indicibus librorum prohibitorum et expurgandorum* which can be

translated as Academic research into the Papal indications for banned and expelled books."

"Are there any generally objectionable books on the list as well?" asks Hildegarde.

"Here you naturally first open the discussion about where the line lies between what is objectionable for ethical and religious reasons and what is irony and mockery. Just think of a title like *Discorso piacevole che le donne non siano della specie degli Uomini, tradotto da Horatio Plato romano*. (*Nice speech that women do not belong to the kind of Human, translated by Roman Horatio Plato)*. "I haven't read it myself," Claudius quickly adds when he sees Henriette and Hildegarde's fiery gazes.

"Printers often receive warnings. Scholars who present arguments that differ from what theologians derive from the Bible are almost certain to be condemned. Consider, for example, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* of Fontenelle or *Brevis anatomia hominis*, by Fromondus Libertus. Johannes Schollius is also on the Index with his *Praxis logica, sive schole et exercitationes dialecticae (The practice of logic, or schooling with exercises in dialectics)*. The complete works of Snellius and almost all of Vossius' oeuvre are included in the *Index*," Wolfgang adds.

"That is often the case with history writing too," Claudius resumes. "Both The *Histoire des papes et souverains chefs de l'église depuis S. Pierre jusqu'à Paul,* as the *Histoire ecclésiastique des églises réformées* by Gilles Pierre have been rejected. The *Examen bulle papalis qua Innocentius X abrogare nititur pacem Germanea* by Johannes Hoornbeeck is unacceptable because the

text contains criticism of the Pope. Joannes Pontanus Isacius is an independent historian with his *Reruni et urbis Amstelodamensium historia* but not welcome. *Tractatus de regio patronatu ac aliis non-nullis regaliis, regibus catholicis in Indiarum occidentalium imperio pertinentibus (A Treatise on Royal Patronage and Other Non-Royal Catholic Monarchs in Relation to the Government of the West Indies)* of Frassus Petrus is clearly unacceptable. The historian Louis Maimbourg, who describes the schism and the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, is also, despite his critical remarks about Calvinism included on the *Index*. Apparently, it's better not to speak about something considered wrong than to draw attention to it and criticise it. Of course, everything that highlights the Inquisition cannot be made public, and that's also the case with the politics of indulgence. The index includes many epistles such as *Lettre d'un avocat au parlement à un de ses amis, touchant l'Inquisition qu'on veut établir en France, à l'occasion de la nouvelle bulle du pape Alex. VII.* en *Lettre écrite de Rome à un docteur de Louvain, au sujet du nouveau décret et du bref de N. S. Père le pape Innocent XII, aux évêques des Païs-Bas, touchant le formulaire contre Jansénius.* There is also *Lettres des fidèles du marquisat de Saluces envoyées à Messieurs les pasteurs de l'église de Genève, contenantes l'histoire de leur persécution* en *Lettres historiques contenant ce qui se passe de plus important en Europe et les réflexions nécessaires sur ce sujet*. These are just a few examples among many others."

"By not making these writings public, the hierarchy greatly impoverishes philosophical and theological discussion," Henriette notes.

"You can also look at it another way," Wolfgang believes. "Does the hierarchy even want to have a philosophical discussion? If it is only about confirming a dogma, then scholasticism is sufficient and discussion and dialectics are only disruptive elements. I think it is a clear sign that not only philosophers, but even a philologist like Martinius Mathias states on the *Index*. Are *A philological dictionary, especially etymological and sacred* cannot pass. The author's connections with the Church of the Bohemian Brethren may not be unrelated to this. And yet, Martinius is also the author of other philological works, including the frequently republished *The foundations of the Greek language*. Through his student Johann Heinrich Alsted he contributed greatly to the spiritual formation of Ian Comenius."

"The *colloquia familiaria* by Desiderius Erasmus are still on the banned list. *Moria encomium; Lingua, sive de lingua usu, atque abusu; Christiani matrimonii institutio; De interdicto esu carnium; Adagia*. In the permitted edition of Paul Manutius, suspicious parts must be deleted. *Parafrasi sopra S. Matteo tradotte da Bernardino Tomitano* and all works in which Erasmus deals with religion are not permitted texts," says Claudius. "One may wonder to what extent the *Index is* no grist to the mill of those who are even more dogmatically arrogant than the Church itself. Instead of allowing disputes to be read, they are suppressed. The entire controversy between Laurentius Jacobus and Hugo Grotius simply remains hidden. By banning texts, criticism of the ban sometimes gives a text more prominence than its intrinsic value," he adds.

"Some have to bear more criticism than others. It seems quite

natural to me that the Sacred Congregation Narciso de Peralta with *De la potestad secular en los eclesiásticos por la economia, y politica* (*Of the secular power under the clergy with regard to economics and politics*) was put on the Index. Criticism of the Jesuit Order is also often banned reading. Consider, for example *La Morale pratique des Jésuites, représentée en plusieurs histoires arrivées dans toutes les parties du monde*.

The Jesuit Order, incidentally, is quickly making moves to protect itself. For example, it receives satisfaction when the Pope bans Magnus Valerian who is a member of the Capuchin Order, a defender of Descartes, and stands up against the erroneous opinions of Aristotle. The real reason is that the Capuchin is standing up against the corrupt morals of some theologians of the Society of Jesus. First, he is banned from writing. When he ignores and publish *apologia contra imposturas jesuitarum* the Pope has him imprisoned. He is only released many years later after the Emperor intervenes on his behalf.

"The whole Index seems designed to make any public criticism impossible," John notes.

"Partly, yes. I gave you, as an example, a very brief overview of what Rome has banned over the last eighty years," Claudius concludes. "Furthermore, there are also locally banned books, such as those by Bartolomeu de las Casas. Despite the papal bull condemning slavery, las Casas, who elaborates on it and denounces the unchristian attitude of the Spanish conquerors, is banned in Castile."

"Isn't there that episode where Bartolomeu describes how God's vengeance sinks a gold transport, resulting not only in the

deaths of many Spaniards but also the loss of a huge bar of gold?"

"Yes. And of course, you can argue about that description of the avenging God. Las Casas usually portrays the natives as peaceful and hospitable people who were considered primitives by the Spanish. Soon, their king became resentful and had to flee inland. Shortly after, Las Casas hears a story from a monk and priest that makes his hair stand on end. That monk has a conversation with a *Cacique* sentenced to death by the Spanish about the Eternal Glory and Rest he will have if he converts before his death. The man ponders for a moment and asks if Spaniards will also be taken to heaven. When the monk replies that heaven is open to all good and pious people, the condemned man immediately says he prefers hell, for fear of having to live forever in heaven with such a bloodthirsty people. That is how the Spaniards worship God and the Holy Catholic faith, Las Casas concludes."

"But do you think the Church itself is responsible for this?" asks Wolfgang.

"The Church is man-made and doesn't necessarily represent what God stands for," Claudius replies. "But since the people of the Church use God's word, they should put His words into action more. The murder of Native Americans for worldly reasons, committed by suspicious individuals who nevertheless remain part of the church community, continues unabated. And I find it hard to imagine that such a thing is God's will."

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"I received a letter today from my friend Abbot Claude Fleury.

He reflects on evangelisation and recounts his correspondence with the Bishop of Metellopolis. In it, he speaks of the slow conversion process in the Netherlands and the Carolingian Empire, and then of the people of Siam," Claudius announces.
“Why the comparison?” Pieter wonders.
He compares the brutal and wild customs of the people here with the gentle and polite people there. Yet, he claims, it is precisely this gentleness that makes them lazy and indifferent. But listen to what he writes: ‘We’ve heard about the pride of the Chinese and their opinion of their knowledge. The barbarians here in the West at least acknowledged their ignorance and respected the Romans. That is always difficult with far-flung nations; they have customs and opinions that are hard to overcome. Anything from the other side of the world hardly seems serious to us. The King of Siam and even the King of China almost seem like theatrical kings. Our first reaction is to laugh when we see men of such a different color and figure. We must look just as strange to the Indians as they do to us. Men with long habits, whose faces are only white, must look like ghosts, and so it doesn’t surprise me that the Siamese’s first reaction is to flee when they see missionaries.’.”
“But does that mean that your friend assumes that the Siamese do not want to convert to Christianity only out of fear?” asks Wolfgang.
“I don’t think so,” Claudius replies. “The way I know him, I suspect he’d advise proceeding cautiously and deliberately. Not just repeating things blindly, but observing and then acting.”
“Why do you say that?” asks Henriette.

“I say this because of something he wrote to me earlier when he was talking about the knowledge of nature. He said that one usually bases knowledge on the authority of Aristotle and his commentators with their closed and deaf general reasoning. But one could base knowledge on research and experience. One should begin by ascertaining the nature of things. He does acknowledge that until recently it was difficult for wise and learned people to conduct experiments. After all, they were largely poor monks or clergymen locked up in their abbeys and colleges, either because of their activity or due to lack of fortune. According to him, this explains the belief in the infinite number of fables with which the world is still infested; so many imaginary properties of plants and animals, so many occult versions, so many sympathies and antipathies. All together, this belief strengthened the influence of magic and astrology, which was already great. The doctrine of this influence of others was an indisputable truth. Claude Fleury, on the other hand, argues that nature exists to help us understand how it works. In this regard, no supernatural explanation is needed even if God sometimes allows magicians to confuse people and sell illusions…”

“So your friend criticises doctrinaire behaviour,” Pieter notes. “I understand why he’s your friend.”

Claudius laughs. “Some of his remarks are not well received by the Curia and by fellow members of the Society of Jesus. He clearly states that the power over the kings, the mixing of spiritual infinity with temporal finitude, the large number of ex-communions, the wealth of the clergy, the relic trade, armed

intolerance, the Crusades, the military orders, the Inquisition, the stakes and the *Index* are the main reasons for the decadence of Christianity."

"And yet he was not condemned as a heretic?"

"He has not received any convictions to date but several of his works are on the *Index*", said Claudius.

"A frequently recurring thing during our meals, that *Index*," Henriette remarks. "Hildegarde, I'm afraid our dinner conversations will also end up there."

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When Claudius is asked in a few years why he ultimately decided to leave the church, he will often reply that the aforementioned table conversations, along with reading Zarah Yacob, certainly played a role. He once confided to Pieter that the letter he wrote to Claude Fleury that autumn of 1690 was a kind of turning point.

My dear and valued friend,

As always, your letter has made me reflect long and hard on our place in the universe. I read your wise observations about the encounter of peoples from distant lands. I myself recently acquired a remarkable book containing the thoughts of Zarah Yacob of Abyssinia. He is, for me, a refreshing spirit whose reflections go beyond those of European humanists, reformers, and Remonstrants.

*I'm trying to make myself clear. I read in a report for the Lords Seventeen and the Church Council in the Northern Netherlands that the East India Company's proselytising efforts in Formosa were facing some problems. The Japanese authorities, in particular, resented this activity: '*We are accused of making the

inhabitants of Formosa Christians and having them in common with the Portuguese' *is wrote in the report. According to the author, the Japanese did not stop at that one accusation. He stated that* 'We suffer injustice and violence'. *The Dutch preachers on the island were later given the understanding to preach Christianity without fanfare.*

But you've often spoken to me about the power of contemplation. Did you know that many of Jacob's thoughts matured while living alone in a cave, interacting only with the locals? He represents the supremacy of reason. For him, all men and women are human beings created equal. That's why he opposes slavery. In this regard, he criticises all religions. Creation, he says, is greater than anything whatever religion can contain.

Zarah or Zera has a more lenient view of non-Christians and the various Christian groups than the humanists. Zera is more acceptive regarding atheists than Thomas More is in his Utopia. And you know that Descartes said of the "faithless" and unbelievers that they were more arrogant than learned. Yet, remember, my dear friend, I was delighted when I first read Descartes' rational approach. I found his statements in Meditationes *that the human soul does not die with the body and that it is a proven fact that God exists only through faith are refreshing propositions. But what fascinates me even more now in reading Zera Yacob is that he uses his inquisitive mind to speak about Universal Creation in a much more open way. To the simple question "*Is everything written in the Holy Scripture true?" *he replies that every religion considers itself true. And so, Jacob continues, everyone says that, since their own faith is correct, all who hold a different faith are God's enemies. That would ultimately mean that all believers would be God's enemies in the eyes of all other believers. And then, my dear friend, I think*

that God can only regret this human envy. That is why I do not believe there is such a thing as predestination. That would make God an arrogant church leader. No, I read the words of Jacob, who says that his creator gave him the ear to listen and reason for reasoning. That is what allows us to ask where we come from, whether life without creation is possible, and if so, whether it would look like the life we know.

Jacob uses the same reasoning when considering religious laws. Are these laws of the Creator, or are they human laws? He argues, for example, that the Creator, in His wisdom, causes blood to flow from women's wombs every month indicating that they are still capable of bearing children. Moses' law that these women are unclean is therefore unnatural and against the Creator, because it taints marriage, mutual assistance, and love in childbearing.

Slavery cannot come from God, says Jacob. These are not His words in the Gospel, nor are they when Muslims claim that it can be right to buy a man. With our intelligence, we know that such laws and pronouncements cannot come from the Creator. He made us equal, as brothers, and told us all to call him Father.

*My dear friend, after reading Jacob, I returned to Descartes' writings. Wasn't it in 1637 that he said: "*I revered our theology, and claimed as much as anyone else to gain heaven: but having learned, as a very certain thing, that the path is no less open to the most ignorant than to the most learned. *I can't help but think that it's a certain arrogance to leave the path to heaven open to those who aren't like us and thus are labeled ignorant. That arrogance may not be fatal, but it's no less condescending. That's why I called Yacob's reasoning a breath of fresh air.*

The way Jacob separates Creation from human laws is another breath of fresh air for me. Could it be that the Law belongs solely

*to humans, and that Creation has no laws but forms a self-regulating whole? That we don't (yet?) have the words to describe it? At one point, Descartes cites 'the true religion', in which only God regulates everything. He offers the organisation of Sparta as a human equivalent: '*As it is quite certain that the state of the true religion, whose ordinances God alone has made, it must be incomparably better regulated than all others. And, to speak of human things, I believe that if Sparta was once very flourishing, it was not because of the goodness of each of its laws in particular, seeing that several were very strange, and even contrary to good morals; but because, having been invented by only one, they all tended to the same end. *The rules of Creation are not laws. It seems to me a considerable reduction to compare the laws of Lycurgus of Sparta with the rules of the creation of the universe. To what extent does this argument serve the preservation of the strict hierarchy? I meditate on brotherhood. How can brotherhood be reconciled with following the laws of those who appoint themselves as leaders? God is humanised and then presented as a kind of more capable Lycurgus. Isn't a leader you must obey implicitly a dictator?*

I cannot help but agree with my friend Wolfgang regarding Comenius' proposals. There is a clear difference between his proposals for organising schools for the poor and the common people and the literal reading of edifying stories, which is the norm today. Dogma can never be science; moral instruction is not an introduction to knowledge and understanding. Yet, Comenius' proposal is not one of general introduction either.

Is it the school's task to educate in managing doubt or to its radical exclusion? Do we speak of the plurality of worlds, or do we not? Religious reformers like Luther and Calvin condemn all

references to the motion of our Earth, basing their argument on Ecclesiastes 1:4-5. 'One generation passes away, and another generation comes, but the earth abides forever. The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, and rushes to his place where he arose..' *They further quote the book of Joshua 10:13: '*And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged itself on its enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? And the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to set about a whole day. *Wolfgang tells me that Comenius was rather evasive. He said that God created the sun so that we wouldn't just see the sun and be blinded by it, but that through its sunlight we could also perceive the rest of God's work. Knowledge, he said, begins with our senses and is then instilled in our intellect. With that, I think we can go in all directions. We can allow ourselves to be blinded by false knowledge and be enlightened so that we see true knowledge. But for dogmatists, what is false can be true, and what is true can be false.*

What more can I say to you, my friend? I can only agree with Ian Amos when he says that humanity was created to care for creation. If we teach everyone to keep this in mind, he writes, it will be possible to rid the world of many hideous and repulsive abuses. Can our current rulers, including those in the church, muster such thoughts?

With this doubt that torments my heart, I say goodbye today.

Your affectionate Claudius.

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These are the last days of the Lesmeister family with Wolfgang and Hildegarde. Pieter and Henriette finally accept Claudius' proposal to return to Cologne together by carriage. They don't quite believe him when he says that the *Berline* almost as

comfortable as the barge, but it shortens the journey considerably. And that allows them to extend their stay with Pieter' parents by a few more days.

"Will we only make progress with our education plans if we can remove schools from the control of dogmatic rulers?" asks Pieter.
"Who are the dogmatic rulers? The ecclesiastical authorities? The secular authorities? The teachers and instructors?" Henriette counters
It may be a paradox, but it seems that precisely those who acquire and wish to retain power are imbued with the importance of education and training. The scribes knew it, the clergy knew it, the enlightened nobility knew it, the rising patricians knew it. But that enlightenment displaces those who have no power or who do not yet possess it, Claudius thinks. Therefore, to prevent them from gaining power, obedience and submission are beaten into them.
"Beating them up!" John wonders.
"Yes. That's an old custom. Listen to what Erasmus wrote more than 150 years ago. He was talking about the monastery schools for the clergy and the city schools for the poor. In those city schools, the *literatores* often hardly read themselves. Erasmus notes: *'You wouldn't think you were in a school, but in a torture chamber; there was nothing to hear but the whooshing of sticks, wailing and sobbing and crude threats.'*."
"But he does want everyone to be able to learn, doesn't he?" asks Wolfgang.
"Certainly. He does talk about the need for *fingere* that you can

translate as *modeling*. And that must happen early. According to him, children must learn to study. And that starts with learning a pure spoken language. *A real chance to learn a language properly comes mainly from talking and interacting daily with people who speak it correctly, and also from the constant reading of authors who have a good command of their language.*" he says. Preceptors or schoolmasters can ensure this, but it must be done in an engaging way. Good guidance will lead to good students, Erasmus claims. He says that young children are guided more by intuition than by deliberation, something the pagan philosophers, as he calls them, had also observed. According to Erasmus, they couldn't discover the reason for this. "For that, you need Christian thought," he continues. "This is why we know that the tendency to evil has been ingrained in us since Adam, the first man. That was beyond dispute for Erasmus. But he continued that most of the evil stems from bad company and a poor upbringing in the early years."

"Comenius also always talked about the importance of the first six years of maternal education," Pieter recalls.

"In a sense, teachers and instructors should reflect on the sins and virtues during their formation. Addressing morality and ethics with children can perhaps be done by *Prudentia, Justitia, Temperantia, Fortitudo, Fides, Spes* and *Caritas* in opposition to *Superbia, Avaritia, Luxuria, Invidia, Gula, Ira* and *Acedia*."

"I think my good friend here is reacting a little too quickly as a bishop," laughs Wolfgang, "but I understand the reasoning. It would already be a big step forward if we let teachers think for themselves about their own virtues and sins and give them the

means to behave in a balanced way. In doing so, they would certainly avoid *ira, invidia* and *acedia* while working with their pupils and students. If they still could raise *prudentia, justitia, temperantia* en *fortitudo* to that amount we would already be well on our way."

Claudius laughs. "Meanwhile you have neatly tucked away *Fides, Spes* en *Caritas*, which you might find too Catholic. But I understand what you're trying to say. The obsession with morality and correct religion does more harm than good. Perhaps church authorities should have less control over schools. May I refer back to our old Erasmus once more? He said a hundred years before Comenius that reason makes man. Now, you have to see him in his own time; he's primarily thinking about the education of aristocrats, but he also pays attention to the education of the common people. *Fingere.* And children are malleable masses from birth. They often learn through imitation, he observes. Therefore, it is crucial that their educators have a good knowledge of their native language. And that the children can quickly learn Latin and Greek.

Wolfgang adds: "But Erasmus advocated doing this in a sensible way. *Nec multa sed optima* was the guideline for providing information, preferably with images. Moreover, the quality of the teacher is a general matter. Furthermore, Erasmus advocated a universal nature of education. *Oportet scholam aut nullam esse aut publicam,* a school that is not for everyone is no school."

Claudius notes: "While Erasmus was thinking about the ideal school and the good teacher, the power of the Church was

present. During the Counter-Reformation, inquisition trials were conducted against teachers simply because they did not represent the true faith. I found in Rome the report of the condemnation of Pieter Mol in 1527, teacher in the town of Ypres today in *Belgium Regia*. Furthermore, the suspicion that village masters might be new Christians led to many such trials. It's striking that the Inquisition was only concerned with religious aspects. The poor preparation of the masters is described, but the church doesn't take this too seriously. In a report from Iberia, I read '*As for his education, Tomás Leal de Sousa declares that he can only read and write and never studied any science*'.

João Gonçalves said something similar: he can read and write, but nothing more. João Gonçalves accumulates his teaching by making blankets.

'*Pedro Cabral managed his father's farm and Teotónio do Bom Sucesso was a tiler in the São Paulo district of Lisbon*'. These men were not good teachers. As mentioned, the Inquisition didn't criticise them for this. Authors like João de Barros, for example, did in 1539.

"So if the church authorities intervene, it doesn't necessarily benefit the children's education," Henrietta concludes. "And what about the intervention of the secular authorities?"

The secular authorities would prefer that schoolmasters know as little as possible. Imagine if people heard everywhere that after the death of Queen Isabella in 1504, conquerors started to wreak much uglier havoc in the New World, now that no more evil could come to the ears of this queen. Imagine if children

were to learn what Bartolomeu de Las Casas wrote. That in the mouth of Christ, the Son of God who took upon himself the suffering of all humanity, these words were put: '*Go and teach all peoples that unbelievers who live peacefully and quietly in their own lands must be forced to convert, on pain of confiscation of all their goods, lands, and at the cost of their liberty*.' Imagine if the children of the Christian world learned from Las Casas's stories that between 1518 and 1530, Spanish murderers exterminated an entire continent with spears, fire, and swords. That in twelve years, these conquerors destroyed four million men, women, and children with their conquests (for under that word they mask their cruel acts), Las Casas explains. According to Las Casas, they were crueler than anything you could say about the Turks, who are reported to have destroyed the Catholic Cause with their invasions and unjust wars, contrary to and condemned by both divine and human law. The Indians were simply massacred out of greed for possessing gold, or out of disappointment when they didn't. That, according to Las Casas, is what happened in Guatemala.

"Then patricians and merchants would also prefer to specify what information schoolmasters have access to. It is, of course, perfidious to speak ill of others and praise oneself at school, as in the pamphlets," Pieter thinks-

"That alone perpetuates the drama Erasmus spoke of in 1517 when he wrote in *Querela Pacis* about the hostility among the peoples: '*What could be worse than nations fighting each other simply because they have different names? There are so many things that should bring them together. Why are they, as humans,*

not kind to their fellow human beings? Why are they, as Christians, not kind to their fellow Christians?',"
Claudius notes.
"Jacobus spoke to me about this forty years ago," says Wolfgang. "It seems hopeless to bring people to an understanding. Especially if the school isn't allowed to address it."
And yet, voices are being raised in that direction. But there are those who don't like to hear those voices. Knowledge and insight should improve understanding. According to Spinoza, there are other conditions attached to this. As a natural philosopher, he radically rejects any form of revelation or prophecy. According to him, prophets don't speak for God but simply have a vast imagination. According to him, God and Nature, as infinite substances, are equivalent. Insight into nature, therefore, increases knowledge of the Divine.
"That of course explains your reservations about the *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Iesu*" says Henriette, laughing.
"You can hardly call it a non-dogmatic approach to education if you look at their rules," Claudius replies. "My criticism is mainly about the way they narrow the curriculum. I have a certain admiration for the way the Jesuits in the Spanish and Portuguese occupations of Brasilia, Chile, and Patagonia generally protect local population with the *Reducciones* from slavery and forced labour. It is a way to only somewhat limit the imported evil. Because it does not give the local population self-determination over their faith and culture. But to return to Europe and education. Here, their rules for theology masters determine Thomas Aquinas as the main reference. Sacred Scripture, Hebrew, dogmatic theology, church history, canon law,

and morality comprise the curriculum. For the masters of philosophy, physics, and mathematics, Aristotle is the prescribed author. In the *Studia Inferiora* the curriculum consists of Latin and Greek, grammar and syntax, rhetoric, and the humanities. Additional subjects include geography, history, and archaeology.

"History as a minor subject," Hildegarde notes.

"Yes, and it's not about the contributions of women in history, Hildegarde. It's about clear sentences."

"Can you give an example?" asks John.

"In the *Ratio* find a model for commentary on Cicero's *dulce ac decorum est pro patria mori.* You can use it to discuss morals and customs, as well as the tribute paid to soldiers killed in battle, as was the case in Athens, Sparta, and Rome. Studying Cicero can simply involve interpreting Latin expressions, even if not necessarily in their context. For example, Cicero's *uno aspectu intueri* written long before Jesus' birth, adapted to the cross. The expression would mean that we can see at a glance those who were very dear to God—*Hoc accommodari posset ad Crucem, apud quam possumus uno aspectu intueri eos, qui Deo erant longe carissimi.*" Claudius concludes.

"We will have the *Ratio Studiorum* in mind and at the same time not lose sight of Ratke, Comenius, Erasmus and Spinoza," says Wolfgang.

"And for that, we can consult the work of my dear friend," Claudius notes. "If I'm not mistaken, Johannes Magister has given orders to begin the typesetting."

"My contribution is minimal," Wolfgang replies. "If I may offer you some advice, delve into what we can expect from John

Locke in the coming years."

The century is coming to an end

Pieter, Henriette and their children are back in Cologne. Pieter is completing his lessons at the *Artistenfakultät* with debates in private study groups at home. These study groups are intended for future teachers. Henriette organizes and supervises them. The couple maintains conversations and correspondence with Claudius and Wolfgang about education and upbringing.

Pieter continues to collect information about schools and education in various places around the world.

From France, he learned that nobles could choose to study at the equestrian academy. This is a kind of rival to the university. The academy offers a curriculum that seemed more useful to the nobility than what the university is offering. Students learn the art of horsemanship, fencing, fortification construction, and dancing. Following in the footsteps of the academy founded by Pluvenil a hundred years earlier, there is now also the Quatre-Nations college of Mazarin, along with other colleges outside Paris. These for instance are located in Saumur, Orléans, and Angers.

The Amsterdam preacher Balthasar Bekker makes a case in defense of knowledge and against superstition. In *The enchanted world* he fiercely opposes belief in devils and witches. The ignorants don't appreciate this and succeed in removing him from office. Nevertheless, the book ensures that the persecution of witchcraft gradually declines.

Henriette learns from Hildegarde that Maria Sibylla Merian van Wieuwerd is moving to Amsterdam. The Labadist commune is struggling with a lack of funds. The reissue of her book on caterpillars and butterflies provides her with the necessary resources and also connects her with other naturalists.

In Rome, Innocent XII succeeded Alexander VIII. This pope, sent by Louis XIV, had ignored the decisions of Innocent XI in his two-year policy. During that period, Claudius found it particularly difficult to cope with the open nepotism of the Venetian. Claudius now expresses his hopes for Innocent XII. With his papal bull, Innocent XII tried to achieve what his predecessors could not or would not do. But he thinks that it will take a long time before the church will gather within itself non-arrogant leaders. And in the meantime, the church's position on slavery remains half-hearted.

Dear parents,

Today is October 18, 1692, and we're still clearing rubble from the great earthquake a month ago. We're doing well, but the two boys are still having bad dreams. We know the earthquake itself was felt by you. In Belgium Regia, several villages have completely disappeared. Among us the tower of the Augustinian church has collapsed. Many households are dealing with broken pottery and destroyed furniture.

It's not just the earth that's shaking. Shocking events are also taking place at the university. As Catholics become less and less tolerant of their dissenting Christian brethren, more and more lecturers suspected of harbouring "heretical sympathies" are being urgently requested to leave their posts. Naturally, there's a lot of scheming, especially by those who see opportunities to climb the

hierarchy themselves. Claudius is going to withdraw from Cologne, for the time being, he says. His Amsterdam friends are busy finding him a suitable job, perhaps in Amsterdam itself, and if not, in Leiden or Utrecht. We'll have to make it without my assignments at the Artistenfakultät now that we're being pointed out as friends of Claudius. But the courses we provide at home are going well. We might just have to turn to the family or find an Amsterdam printer for new publications.
Your very affectionate son Pieter

Dear children and grandchildren,

*We are delighted to hear that you survived the earthquake unscathed. We cannot, of course, be so cheerful about the damage caused by intolerance and arrogance. Here too, the greater weight of the Counter-Reformation is palpable. More and more books are being dismissed as unsuitable because they are perceived to have a reforming character. This makes the Frankfurt book market less interesting for Amsterdam dealers and scholars, despite the long tradition of visiting the printers at the book fair here. Those looking for the publication of new ideas in the German Empire are increasingly going to Leipzig. Our cousins and Wolfgang, however, maintain the profitable business of printing almanacs and small books. Like many other printers, we do not want to run the risk of being left with unsellable products simply because they suddenly appear on the market.*list of prohibited books *appear. This certainly made the profession less intellectually attractive. We can only hope that, like the Calvinist Huguenots before them, the most dogmatic Catholics will find Frankfurt a free city too small and will seek out more attractive residential areas, either in the Palts or elsewhere.*

We look forward to Claudius' next letters from Amsterdam or the surrounding area. He won't find John Locke there anymore.

We heard about him returning to England with the Princes of Orange. I hope Claudius will feel at home in his voluntary exile, now that he has decided to lay down his bishop's robes and leave the Roman Catholic Church.

Wolfgang and I hug you and the children in our thoughts.

Poor poor children

It is the last years of the 17th century.

In 1694, the Bank of England was founded. The following year, Mary Stuart died. In Florence, Bartolomeo Cristofori experimented with a new instrument that would gradually replace the harpsichord. It was called the piano-forte or hammerklavier.

In a number of nations where the Reformed or Lutheran Churches are the official churches, ten days are skipped in February of the year 1700, thus replacing the Julian calendar with the Gregorian calendar.

By 1700 D.C., fifty thousand slaves were being transported annually. Originally, slavery largely disappeared in Europe itself because the trade was considered immoral and ultimately violated Christian norms and values. But that quickly changed with the transatlantic slave trade. Justification was once again sought in the Bible. Genesis 9 states that the descendants of Ham are cursed to slavery. Martin Luther argued that Ham was the progenitor of all people of color. This gave Lutherans a basis for justifying slavery. The proceeds of the new human trade increased prosperity in Europe, which thus balanced its trade with Asia. The transatlantic triangular trade allowed for

European expansion and the development of enrichment based on ownership and the trading of property. Around 1450, European rulers and adventurers began expanding their possessions, first with locally enslaved people and today with imported slaves. Some nine to ten million people have already been shipped as slaves. About one and a half million died during the voyage before they could be sold and further enslaved and abused. Under the Avis and Habsburg dynasties, and now Bragança and Bourbon, Portuguese and Spanish traders have long dominated the European trade, primarily in Black people. These Iberian traders are soon joined by traders from almost every European nation, under almost every royal house. The pursuit of profit creates new competition. Pieter learns from missionaries that on the large overseas estates, slaves are also bred and traded like animals, making the purchase of labour cheaper. The slaves generally fare considerably worse than the already miserable serfs and bondsmen in Europe. Nobles, clergy, and patricians remain deaf and blind to the inhumane conditions of the poor because it is precisely these that make their prosperity possible.
Humanists, philosophers, teachers and other intellectuals are consciously or unconsciously trapped in a network of enslavement that finances their own intellectual labour.

Pieter and Henriette still live in Cologne. Claudius has settled permanently in Amsterdam. News arrives from Frankfurt about Wolfgang's deteriorating health. John is 22 and traveling. Henriette jokes that he is on *Petit Tour*. The Grand Tour is, after all, that of children of patricians, nobles, and wealthy

bourgeoisie. John is currently staying in Frankfurt at the request of his grandparents after some experiences on the eastern border of the German Empire and a visit to *Belgium Fœderatum* guided by Claudius.
Before he visited also has some cities of *Belgium Regia*. He witnessed, among other things, on May 1, 1698, how a small statue, named *Manneken Pis* is dressed in a proper uniform. It is a gift from the governor, Maximilian II. Besides this jovial story, he also writes about his stay in Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. He visits Ostend, located on the Mare Germanicum, where he learns of plans to establish a shipping company for trade with the Indies.

My good friend and master Claudius,

Henriette and I would like to thank you again for the way you guided John in his Petit Tour as Henriette likes to say. He writes he was surprised to discover that in most village schools you could visit, only the little wooden or hornbooks are available, and not even the Haneboek. It seems as if the Little Schools have stood still in time. John is now with his grandparents, and you can imagine how sad this news is for Wolfgang, who was so convinced that at least in Belgium Fœderatum, Comenius' work would quickly gain traction. Can you imagine, dear friend? Comenius is better known in Batavia or the Molucas than in Gelderland or Zeeland.
From England I hear that, on the advice of John Locke, workhouses *are being established for children aged three to fourteen. The idea is that the poor will find poverty just as undesirable as the wealthy. And therefore, they say, children must be trained as quickly as possible to be willing to work. I don't know what Locke himself thinks about the practical implementation of his proposal, but I'm hearing sad reports. Generally, any education*

in knowledge and science is considered unnecessary. Only training in manual labour is desirable. From what I hear, the workhouses seem an even poorer affair than the Little schools *by Charles Démia, which we discussed a few years ago. They are no more than the reissue of initiatives such as the* Grey Friars of Christ's Hospital *and other institutions for orphans and the poor, which now serve the more affluent working class.*
From France comes the same old news. They are only concerned with the moral and religious education of the children so that the different population groups can live together in relative peace and the damage that poverty and the poor inflict on the rich is limited. I can still see the epistle in which Demia states that seminars and colleges are not for the poor: 'Les pauvres n'ayant pas le moyen d'élever ainsi leurs enfants, ils les laissent dans l'ignorance de leurs obligations: le soin qu'ils ont de vivre fait qu'ils oublient celui de leur faire apprendre à bien vivre et eux-mêmes ayant été mal élevés, ils ne peuvent communiquer une bonne éducation qu'ils n'ont jamais eue. […] Ils se soucient fort peu que leurs enfants apprennent les bonnes mœurs et les devoirs du christianisme qu'ils ignorent. [...] Ainsi l'on voit avec un sensible déplaisir que cette éducation des enfants du pauvre peuple est totalement négligée, quoiqu'elle soit la plus importante de l'état.
[The poor do not have the means of education even their children, they are lazy in the ignorance of their obligations: the care that they receive from life is due to what they normally do to learn to live well and that they have not been educated, they cannot give good education that they never receive. […] They care very little that their children learn good morals and the duties of Christianity, which they are ignorant of. [...] Thus one sees with considerable displeasure that this education of the children of the

poor people is totally neglected, although it is the most important of the state.]'
Charity primarily serves those who flaunt their charity. Charity or religious concern. I was told by a Portuguese missionary and botanist that even in the Portuguese Empire, the concern for child education has remained the same for a hundred years. He quoted a concern expressed by the city officials of Lisbon: "We are very interested, they say, in knowing the qualities and habits of the children's schoolmasters and the lives they lead. For it has come to our attention that in some Kingdoms and Provinces, apostates are sowing their evil doctrine in children's schools." If these heretics think like those who claim to put Locke's proposals into practice, then those in power needn't worry too much. But I must honestly admit that I know too little about John Locke's ideas. If what I described above is correct, all of this gives me pause for thought. Perhaps Jacobus and Wolfgang were mistaken when they, each in their own way, looked forward to his work with hope.
Yours affectionately, Pieter and Henriette.

My dear, dear friends,

I ask your forgiveness for making you wait so long for an answer. My dear, dear friends. What sad news reaches us from Frankfurt. I understand you saw it coming, but it remains hard. With Wolfgang's passing, you, Pieter, lost a dear father, and I a loyal friend. So he just missed reaching the next century, as he himself foresaw ten years ago during our long dinner conversations. I keep him in my thoughts and in my prayers to the Almighty, with the assurance that eternal rest and peace await him.
So, Henriette has introduced a new concept: the Petit Tour. *I hope it will teach more to those who experience it than* la Petite École *to whom it is obligatory.*

You're questioning the thoughts of John Locke. I have read Some Thoughts Concerning Education *from 1693. Two years ago it also appeared in the Dutch language under the title* Enige bedenkingen over de opvoeding der kinderen. *I am sending you a copy herewith.*

In his recent Essay Concerning Human Understanding *Locke returns to the Aristotelian idea that a human being comes into the world without content. He compares* tabula rasa *with a white sheet of paper, and speaks about the immaculate mind and soul. You know how I feel about phenomena for which one appeals to immaculateness..*

In any case, Locke argues that a child's development depends directly on the parents, who, by their actions, will determine whether the child will be good or bad. A child must be educated in four things, according to Locke: virtue, wisdom, good conduct, and learning. The physician also intervenes when he speaks of a healthy body and life. Swimming, fresh air, and meatless meals are mandatory ingredients. The sin of the flesh has different flavours. It is clear that Locke is only addressing the education of boys from upper classes when he says in paragraph six (§6): I use the word He here, because the main focus of my reasoning here is on how a young Son of respectable parents should be brought up from his youth, which is always not in accordance with the education of Daughters.'.

The philosopher argues that beating children should be forbidden because it is an ineffective form of parenting. Children must learn to obey, and therefore they must be kept in check, but severe punishment brings no benefit. In §36, he advocates for gentleness towards children. They should be able to play and have access to toys. However, one should avoid making them scream or simply giving them whatever they desire. In §52, he reiterates that beating

*and other physical punishments certainly do not lead to noble people. This brings us to §70. Do sons stay home or do they go to school? Are they kept childish if boys are kept at home? Should they be sent to school? Are they more ignorant of the world if they stay home? Will attending school infect them with rudeness and vice? A tutor or disciplinarian at home watches over two or three children, a tutor at school over his fifty to one hundred schoolboys. That's an impossible task, even for the most astute teacher. "*In any case*," Locke continues in §71, "*do nothing in their presence that they shouldn't imitate. Anything we find wrong that escapes us, they will imitate and protect themselves by claiming to be following an example.*" I can imagine Henriette, as a mother, certainly has something to say about this; do you hear my irony? Locke doubts whether physics will ever become a science. Nature, he says, was created by such a wise being that it will perhaps never be understood. Can physics be separated from metaphysics? Yet, he continues, there can be progress: '*Just look at the excellent book of Mr. Newton, who, by the mathematical art of nature, can illuminate some things that were previously obscure to us.' But… 'Although Latin and Learning are the most important nowadays, these are perhaps things that a good gentleman in his profession will have little need of.' On the other hand, he must have the knowledge* 'to be a diligent and active man, in conduct commensurate with his rank, as well as to be excellent and useful to his country in the state in which he is'.

What should we do, my friends, to avoid having children learn Greek or Latin? Make these languages unnecessary for acquiring wisdom and scholarship? Then education in living languages is essential, along with a great need for translation. Locke is a strong proponent of the former. But, I say, please don't use the argument that the craftsman wastes time learning languages that can lead

him to scholarship. Learn languages, including Latin if necessary, speak them, and use them rather than simply study them.
In any case, Locke warns in §120, one should not despise any question from children, and one should also take care never to give them a deceitful or ridiculous answer.
And what about allocation? You feel a certain criticism of Seneca. Locke says that Seneca's words suggest that we don't learn to live by allocation, but rather by dispute, and that such an education is more useful in the university than in the world. The Indians, says Locke, provide us with an example of allocation. They listen to someone until they stop speaking and don't interrupt each other. And us? We often demonstrate only an incomplete education, which reveals the remnants of our barbarism.
Locke also talks about evil. To avoid it, the tutor or teacher must have civilised manners and be knowledgeable about the world. He must be skilled in the sciences he wishes his students to become proficient in. And he must be skilled in education. Children love freedom from birth, but also dominion and possessions. So don't give a child what it begs or cries for. And be aware of the constant danger that they learn to do evil. History, says Locke, is full of stories that end in fighting and killing. Victors are sometimes the greatest executioners of the human race, but they receive the most important titles of honor. These titles seduce the youth who then imagine that manslaughter is the most praiseworthy office in the world and murder of men the greatest act of heroism. Here, you might say, Locke's love of humanity comes to the fore. Yet, he sometimes contradicts himself when you consider his own love of property. What should you make of the justification of private property based on agricultural labour? Locke assumes that everyone can take possession of a portion of the abundant, fallow land by cultivating it or having it cultivated. He is involved as an

investor in the colonisation of America. The original inhabitants, who, very conveniently for Locke, are now no longer orators but hunter-gatherers, can be dispossessed without difficulty, because there is enough land left over. Apparently, he knows little about the extermination of the Native Americans. Locke also understands labour for the cultivation of nature to include hired labour, or, as in his proposed constitution for the Carolinas, labour of serfs and slaves for the benefit of the owners.
Dear friends, I am now deviating from our concerns about education and school.
I am eagerly awaiting your messages and want to assure you once again that Wolfgang is in my thoughts.
I am also writing to Hildegarde today.

Yours affectionately, Claudius.

Good friend and master Claudius,

The first thing Henriette and I did after we received your letter about John Locke and the enclosed Some thoughts on the education of children *was to read the book. It remains difficult to interest philosophers and scholars in the education of the children of serfs and servants. Yet, Locke cannot be accused of dishonesty. After all, he himself claims to be discussing the education of boys from wealthy families. It seems to us that the same wind still blows from England as from Démia's France regarding the education and upbringing of poor children.*
We often think of Wolfgang. It is perhaps of little consolation to know that he hasn't had to experience the same disappointment here on earth with the texts of someone he spoke about since he met Jacobus. For our own orientation in our work with teachers and instructors, we believe the older master Erasmus and the younger master Comenius are of greater use. I would even venture

to say that Erasmus had a less dogmatic view, even on education, than Comenius. But I could be wrong. Perhaps our son John will gain a better understanding of this. After all, since his visit to Amsterdam, he has been intensively studying all the writings of those who have been involved with the education and upbringing of all children, regardless of their background, over the past two hundred years.

We must confess that we are somewhat disappointed with the image of the child's soul as a blank slate, which is indeed nothing but a contemporary version of Aristotle's tabula rasa. *Although Locke clearly states that no questions should be left unanswered by children, he continues to cling to the idea that everything must be instilled in children, in a well-considered manner. Again, it seems to us to be more about didactics than mathetics. One might wonder whether children without original imprinting don't ask questions. Henriette argues that even newborns, before they have mastered human speech, ask many questions and that crying or screaming isn't necessarily related to possessiveness. Perhaps crying is a way to tell parents they didn't understand the request for milk or affection. We can agree with Locke that homeschooling has its advantages compared to going to school and getting lost among 50 to 100 classmates. But not everyone can afford homeschooling. And with homeschooling, we also deviate from the idea of public access to science and scholarship. In our view, homeschooling for those who can afford it is the wrong answer to the poor quality of public schools, which, as Erasmus puts it, are the only true schools. So, instead of giving in to the arguments of our contemporaries Locke and Fénelon, we should once again listen to Erasmus, who is more than a century old. Locke has boys from the wealthy in mind. One could argue that Fénelon also considers girls from the wealthy. Erasmus suggests that we should work on the training of teachers*

*in general when he says, "*We love learning from teachers we care about. Some teachers, however, are so incredibly boring that even their wives don't like them.".

It's quite clear that Locke speaks of the children of serfs and slaves not as a physician-philosopher but as a possessor. You rightly pointed out he does not condemn slavery. Not only does he agree with the Christian tradition that there are just wars in which prisoners of war can be enslaved, but apparently the wars among the peoples of Africa, whether or not instigated by European slave traders, are also just wars. It seems as if he's making a distinction between human beings and animal beings. Is he aware that the Fundamental Constitution *of Carolina grants Whites complete dominion over the African slaves, as if they were horses and other animals? Or perhaps, as we see even more often in some contemporary authors, he is simply misled by the common idea that poverty is a predestined condition that cannot be remedied by education. Tabula rasa, sed non nimis?*

Yours affectionately,
Pieter and Henriette.

My dear and valued friends,

A few words before I leave Amsterdam for a short time. Ironic statements about the thoughts of others are always dangerous, of course, when we don't know how to place those thoughts. Yet, I can't help but think of Zera Yacob again. Remember how I told you he's inquisitive about the truth of what's written in Holy Scripture? He talks about how everyone says their faith is correct, which immediately makes the faith of others incorrect, making them enemies of God. As I said, this is enough for Yacob to be cautious in judging others.

Descartes wasn't so circumspect. He wrote, after all, that unfaithful people and atheists are more arrogant than learned.

Locke argues in his Epistle on Toleration that atheists should not be tolerated at all.
Mendonça da Silva and Las Casas tell us that this has always been an argument to justify the slavery of atheists or the unfaithful.
I cannot verify whether this is also the case with Locke.
In haste, your affectionate Claudius.

John

From Cologne to Ghent

John is back home after his *Petit Tour* and his stay in Frankfurt. He vividly remembers the emotional days surrounding the death of his grandfather Wolfgang and the farewell to his grandmother Hildegarde. He wants to follow in his parents' footsteps and train teachers, while also gaining experience as a teacher himself.

The Rhineland is once again subject to skirmishes and troop movements. This time because both Louis XIV and the Austrian branch of the Habsburg House want to annex Spain and all its overseas possessions, after the Spanish branch of the Habsburg House dies out. A rather unexpected consequence of the growing hostility between the European royal houses is the Thurn und Taxis family selling all their possessions in *Belgium Regia* to settle in at Frankfurt.

In March 1702, William III of Orange died in London. This is followed by the coronation of his sister-in-law Anne as Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Anne Stuart thus suddenly finds herself caught in the middle of the War of the Spanish Succession.

In May 1703, Peter the Great ordered the construction of what he envisioned as Russia's new capital: St. Peter-Burch. With this, he aimed to bring Russia closer to Europe. Construction involved years of forced labour by Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Yakuts, and Tatars

John takes a position as a tutor in Mainz. His cousins from Frankfurt have always kept in touch with the family that hosted Johannes during his studies. This way, John quickly expands his local circle of friends. The advantage of staying in Mainz is that John can sail up the Main River to Frankfurt to visit his grandmother, and during academic breaks, sail down the Rhine to Cologne to visit his family. This is as long as the constant threat of troop movements and the associated siege of riverside towns doesn't disrupt river traffic.

On December 2nd, John had just finished a visit to Frankfurt. He was talking with his grandmother about the role of women in childrearing. They discussed the predominantly male perspective on women's roles. Hildegarde compared comments from her pen pals to what can be found in the writings of Erasmus, Comenius, and Locke. John reflected on this conversation and wondered how he could gain more insight into the prejudices surrounding women's education as he prepared for his trip to Cologne for the Christmas holidays.

On the morning of December 7th, he embarks. It quickly becomes clear that the journey will be turbulent due to the rising wind. As often happens when the boat rocks more violently, the travellers begin to chat. John strikes up a conversation with Marianne Grünen, a young woman who tells him she has just turned 20 and is traveling from Mainz to Cologne to visit an aunt. Their conversation quickly shifts from the more common topics among travellers to an exchange about ethics and the role peace-loving missionaries could play if they were encouraged to engage in open dialogue rather than simply

preaching conversion. At one point, John mentions his mother's correspondence with Maria Sybille Merian. Marianne is surprised that John has heard about her. She tells John what she has read about her trip to Suriname with her daughter. According to Marianne, Maria Sybille was sharply critical of what she described as dehumanising slavery, in which the white rulers abused the local Surinamese population, not at least sexually. Maria allegedly learned from Surinamese women the herbal mixtures they used to avoid childbearing, so that they would not later suffer under the Dutch. She specifically mentions the relationship between Maria Sybille and the '*She-Indian*' which she brought from Suriname to Amsterdam, presumably for her knowledge of plants and butterflies, when a deafening thud rocks the boat and throws all the passengers to the deck. Tree branches crash down onto the barge under a heavy rain. The skipper tries to disengage from the two trees that fell just in front of the bow. He fails. He then screams for help to bring the boat to shore as quickly as possible. John and Marianne were unaware, but the falling trees severed the harness connecting the draft horses to the boat. Now it's crucial not to slide into the middle of the rapidly swelling river. Although it's only just after noon, the leaden sky and heavy rain make it almost as dark as nightfall. With all their might, they use sticks, oars, and even luggage to steer the boat. After a few frightening moments that seem endless, the bow creaks into the bank. The towpath is barely visible beneath the mass of branches, mud, and mire that slid down the hills. Marianne and John cling to each other as they try to reach the towpath. Then

they feel reaching hands pulling them up. Soaking wet, they embrace tightly, before both now extend their free hands to other travellers trying to climb out of the boat and onto the towpath. After nearly an hour of slogging and sliding through the clay, the wet, frightened group reaches a small village. There, they are already prepared for their arrival. First, the broken-away draft horses appear, and a little later, their orphaned drivers. John and Marianne are given shelter in the forge. Without false shame, the husband and wife unclothe and dry the young people. Then, wrapped in sheets, they sit close together before the small brazier, where charcoal burns, sipping a hot herbal drink.

A few days later, they arrive in Cologne. They have covered most of the ten miles from the shipwreck site on foot. The city itself also shows signs of destruction. Houses and churches are damaged, roofs have been torn off, and trees are still lying on the ground. Both John's parents and Marianne's aunt claim that they felt the earth shake on Saturday morning, as if it were an earthquake. Naturally, as a result of the events, John and Marianne visit each other frequently. John's parents suggest that Marianne and her aunt spend Christmas together.

Around Christmas, Pieter and Henriette also receive a letter from Claudius. Troubled by a message from the *Genuine Haarlem Courante* he wants to know if they are doing well. After all, De Courante writes that in Cologne "As in other places, there was a horrible storm that caused extensive damage to houses, churches, and other buildings. Many trees were uprooted everywhere; and on Saturday morning, a kind of earthquake

was felt.”.
In the same letter, Claudius notes that intolerance toward dissenting teachers in Catholic countries has certainly not diminished. He relates that he learned from a Portuguese New Christian, who has since moved to Amsterdam, that the Inquisition in Portugal had investigated 17 village masters in recent years, nine of whom were convicted of Judaism.

Two years after the events now referred too as *'The Great Storm of 1703*', the message comes from Delft that Nicolaus Cruquius collects information about the weather with regular measurements of temperature, air pressure, humidity and precipitation.

Shortly thereafter, John and Marianne marry in Cologne. They then spent two weeks with Hildegarde. They are unaware that this would be their last visit to Hildegarde. The young couple became increasingly eager to move to Flanders. After all, it seems that the patricians of the major cities of the Southern Netherlands create better conditions for trade and industry than the city administrators in the Rhineland. This, despite the ongoing “little war” waged by the royal houses over the Spanish succession. John knew from friends that not only physicians connected to the *Ghent Medical College* are seeking good preceptors for their children. Wealthy cloth and spice traders had extensive contact with the Republic. The most enlightened among them prefer preceptors who prepare their children for higher education in other regions over the strict and dogmatic teaching of the Augustinian or Jesuit college. And this despite

the French restrictions on trade with England and the Republic since 1701. In September 1703 and January 1704, there was even a general ban on trading with the English and the Dutch, respectively, without special permission. Meanwhile, the Grand Alliance recaptured Ghent. And although this conquest was not as peaceful as desired, the economy flourished again.

And so, in the late summer of 1706, John and Marianne begin their joint adventure when they settle in Ghent. The Battle of Ramillies was over, and the battlefield on the coast seemed less turbulent. John did hear, however, that Ostend had been almost completely destroyed by the Alliance.
John and Marianne will share a mansion with a couple John befriended during his *Petit Tour*. Marianne is pregnant with their first child, due to be born in February of the following year. Overjoyed, 29-year-old John and 24-year-old Marianne name their son Dieudonné. Marianne is assisted by Jan Palfijn. The couple met the obstetrician and master surgeon when John became a tutor to the children of some of his colleagues. Congratulations arrive from Cologne, and Henriette remarks that the boy could also have been named Jeandonné.

Marianne divides her time between nursing and playing with Dieudonné and compiling the many notes on education and training that she and John have. In one of her diaries, she writes: *It's now clear that school is becoming increasingly common for the youngest. This is partly due to the concept of childhood that philosophers and educators have further developed over the past hundred years. It now appears that school itself has contributed to*

defining the youngsters. At school, young people are not sons — or, more rarely, daughters — of their parents, but children of a specific age group. They are young people, admittedly dependent on older people, but here they have no domestic responsibilities and are outside the economic and work sphere. This is especially true for the descendants of nobles, patricians, and wealthy citizens. Others are often put to work in childhood, either out of their parents' need for survival or because they are ordered to do so by those who claim to have rights over them, such as over their parents, the serfs from whom they descend.

Where does this mainstreaming of schools come from? Is it because children — or at least some of them — are assigned a different status than that of minor sons or daughters? Is it a noble proposal from those who see children as free from original sin? From those who see children as eager young people who can interact perfectly well under the guidance of one or more adults? Or is it an arrogant obligation from those who feel their power and authority threatened? Then the public city school would only be useful for promoting the continued enslavement of working people, commoners, serfs, and slaves. John showed me De ratione studiis puerilis *by the Spanish-born scholar and humanist Juan Luis Vives, a contemporary of Erasmus. Despite his criticism of scholasticism, he does see the little school as a means of combating idleness and vagrancy. School, he says, socializes children better than ignorant parents and instills in them respect for order. By counteracting the negative influence of the family — after all, every poor child is a potential wanderer and a burden on public order — one can also combat the negative forms of poverty: begging, refusal*

to work, rebellion. School is the means of halting the rise of vagrants. That seems to me to be the recipe that Démia developed further.
Yet Vives also speaks of the need for a visual way to teach children morals and religion and to teach them to read. Is that why Comenius, after quoting Vives, writes: "The theory is simple and short and offers only delight; the practice, on the other hand, is difficult and time-consuming, but very useful"?
We are thinking about this.".

Meanwhile, John reads in a Saturday edition of the *Antwerp Post News* Papin ultimately designed a model for a new type of boat. According to this report, Papin proposed a paddle-wheel boat powered by a steam cylinder and muscle power, which would connect Kassel with Bremen along the Fulda and Weser rivers. However, the paddle-wheel boat project was blocked on September 24, 1707, by the Münden Guild of Boatmen in a dispute over passage rights and ultimately abandoned. According to the same report, the Papin family subsequently moved to London. John recalls the conversation between his father and brother when they sailed up the Rhine from Cologne to Mainz seventeen years earlier. He writes to Pieter about it and asks if the *Acta Eruditorum* writes more about the invention, now that it apparently works effectively.

Troubled times

After Ramillies, Ghent indeed came under the authority of the Grand Alliance again, but Louis XIV refused to give up without a

fight. The people of Ghent soon discovered this. The French king commissioned his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, to join forces with the Duke of Vendôme to recapture Ghent and Bruges. And so, the French reoccupation of Ghent on 5 July 1708 became a reality. This caused problems for Count Marlborough of the Grand Alliance. The supply lines for his armies to and from Holland and England, ran over the Scheldt via Antwerp and Ghent, by sea via Ostend and Bruges, and overland via Brussels to Antwerp. Because the French armies entrenched themselves between the English and the sea routes to England, the supply lines, both via Bruges and via the Scheldt and Ghent, were in danger of running dry. But the Alliance did not sit idle. Prince Eugène de Savoie returned from Germany with his army and joined that of Count Marlborough. This coalition now poses a direct threat to the troops of Burgundy and Vendôme. Count de la Motte, commanding the French troops stationed in Ghent, orders the city to be abandoned, thus returning it to the Alliance without a fight. However, the States General was displeased with the previous attitude of the people of Ghent, particularly the lack of resistance during the French capture of the city. And although the aldermen of Ghent refer in a document to *the fact of the surprise* to explain their attitude, the Dutch imprison several urban notables in retaliation. The English take the matter more lightly. They advise against alienating the population, if only for commercial reasons. However, the States General does not want to lose face by possibly revoking their earlier order. The compromise is a general amnesty whereas prisoners are rehabilitated.

Meanwhile, Count Marlborough and Prince Eugène continue south and begin the siege of Lille. However, this city has modern fortifications and a strong French garrison. A shortage of ammunition threatens to force a premature abandonment of the siege. The only supply line comes from the Kingdom of England. Marlborough therefore orders a large convoy to be sent via Ostend. This would require 700 slow wagons to make a journey of over 16 Belgian miles from the port city through Flanders. The transport is escorted by 6,000 foot soldiers and 1,500 horsemen, led by the English Major General Webb. Count de la Motte, who has been stationed in Bruges after leaving Ghent, learns of the operation and marches to meet the convoy with approximately 24,000 troops. The interception takes place in Wijnendale, five and a half miles from Ostend. The consequences of the battle are severe for both sides. The human suffering is immense, but the Alliance wins the battle. Thus, the convoy reaches Lille and the siege can continue. Three weeks later, on October 22, 1708, the city falls. The war manoeuvres shift towards Paris. Negotiations are discreetly initiated to end the hostilities between the royal houses. All parties are tired of the war. It is cynical that the human losses are not so much discussed, but rather the cost of maintaining the armies. It has become too expensive for everyone.

The financial drain caused by troop movements and the siege of cities was followed by another, when the winter of 1709 suffered three months of uninterrupted, brutal frost. From Scandinavia to Italy and from France to Russia, rivers and lakes were frozen. In January, the average temperature in some parts

of the German Empire was only half a degree on the Rømer scale, while in the Netherlands it was 4.8 degrees. This was well below the 7.5 degrees Rømer at which ice melts. In the Netherlands, the ground froze to a depth of over a meter. Cattle died in barns, deciduous trees split open in the cold, and travellers froze to death en route. Wine barrels froze in cellars, fruit trees, and even oak trees were destroyed. To make matters worse, the grain harvest was largely lost shortly before the frost set in.

Hildegarde would not live to see the official end of the War of Succession in 1713. A year after the cold winter, news arrived from Frankfurt and Cologne that she had died on June 14th. John had been terribly unhappy for months. Their move to Ghent and the constant troop movements, from France, the Walloons, and Bavaria, had made family visits impossible for the last seven years.

Belgium Austria

Shortly before the official end of hostilities between the warring royal houses, news arrives from England that Thomas Newcomen has designed a practically working steam engine.
In Flanders, the settlement of regulations regarding mutual debts and compensation outstanding as a result of sieges and quartering is dragging on. Meanwhile, Ghent is experiencing a new economic downturn, primarily related to import regulations and tolls.
Saint Peters-burgh is officially inaugurated as the new capital of

Russia, although construction of the city is not yet complete. The death toll among the forced labourers has already reached 100,000.

John bitterly reflects that the education of these forced labourers and their children will probably never be discussed. Among them, you probably won't find any educated people, except perhaps a few who were later sentenced to forced labour for one reason or another. When he discusses this with Marianne, she sadly remarks that the world continues to run on forced labour and serfdom, or worse. In recent years, with Claudius' help, she has gained insight into despicable patents regarding human values. One of the reasons for the bankruptcy of the Dutch West India Company is related to the loss of the benefits associated with the *Asiento de Negros*, a contract with the Spanish Crown that gives privileges in the trade of Negro slaves. In 1686, Spain had decided that the *Asiento* was to benefit Catholics, not heretics. Therefore, Portuguese traders were granted a monopoly on trade in the areas under the control of the Spanish Crown. However, they were still secretly working with the Dutch West India Company. This changed in 1701. Jean du Casse acquired the *Asiento* for the French. And now, with the Treaty of Utrecht, the contract goes to the British. The last letter Marianne received from Claudius, shortly before his death in 1714, contains a copy of the *Asiento or contract for allowing the subjects of Great Britain the liberty of importing negroes into the Spanish America, signed by the Catholic King at Madrid*. The *Asiento de Negros* is good for 30 years. This means that *Aciento* is back into non-Catholic hands. The contract was,

after all, nominally awarded to the Anglican Queen Anne. The British would supply the Spanish colonies with 4,800 units per year. Male slaves were considered one unit, women and children fractions of a unit. Britain was allowed to open offices in Buenos Aires, Caracas, Cartagena, Havana, Panama, Portobello, and Vera Cruz to manage the Atlantic slave trade. One ship carrying a maximum of 500 tons of general merchandise could also be sent to one of these locations annually. A quarter of the profits would go to the King of Spain. The start of the contract included two additional sailings. Marianne knew that the trade would be incorporated into the activities of the South Sea Company. Due to Britain's impending bankruptcy, the creditors of the British Navy were offered the option of converting their debts into shares in this new company. Its administrators were not very pleased with the slave trade, which they considered loss-making. But eventually the South Sea Company will disappear in 1720 as a result of a bubble construction, based on the fictitious value of shares. The *Aciento*-contract for the slave trade is immediately taken over by another British company.

John increasingly feels a sense of powerlessness as he becomes more aware that knowledge and scholarship are being denied to a large portion of the population. What shocks is that the power and possessions of a few control the ignorance or disinformation of many, primarily by determining the content of education. How long will it take for this cultivated ignorance to escape control? And what will be the consequences?

My dear dear father,

What terrible news has just reached us! When we received your

urgent message, we all started trembling, even before Marianne could open the letter. Yes, my fingers were shaking too much. Mother has died suddenly. Seventy years… Suddenly, several pillars are being swept away from under my feet. Grandmother, Claudius, and now Mother.
And what a blow for you, dear father. You've lost three of your loyal companions in such a short time. Words fail us. We find some small comfort in knowing that you've taken over as grandfather to Johannes and Martin's children after Leopold's passing. We hope this gives your days new meaning.
And your conversations… If you need to exchange ideas about parenting and education, know that we're always available. Marianne and I have gathered a lot of information together along the way about the contradictory ways in which children are raised. Hypocrites impose on others what they themselves don't adhere to. Missionaries who have been to America and with whom we've been in contact tell us that locals have an expression that can be translated as "speaking with a forked tongue". That seems very apt for someone who, from a position of power or a sense of superiority, speaks so ambiguously about raising children in Christian values. Unfortunately.
Dear father, we hug you in our thoughts,
Your affectionate son and daughter-in-law.

In the following years, the Southern Netherlands adapted to a new reality. *Belgium Regia* is now *Belgium Austriacum* and cities and crafts want first and foremost to secure their rights and privileges.
Eugene of Savoy is governor of the Southern Netherlands, but the Marquis of Prié oversees all affairs. He imposes new taxes on the cities and questions their privileges. Meanwhile,

compensation from the various princely houses for the war effort is lacking. This causes many cities to struggle and leads to widespread poverty. Yet, the Austrian authorities refuse to waive the new taxes, which are intended to finance barriers to protect against potential new acts of war from their neighbours.

The crafts are powerful enough to block the taxes. When the Austrian authorities try to change this, things go wrong. The Marquis de Prié fells compelled to promise to restore old privileges. However, this remains just words. The people become aware of this, and rebellion and riots brake out in Ghent, Antwerp, Mechelen, and Brussels. Dean Frans Anneensens is subsequently imprisoned. Among the craftsmen of Brussels, there is considerable doubt about his role in the uprising. He was perhaps not the instigator. But Anneensens is found guilty in a show trial and subsequently beheaded. According to some, this was a showdown with the ruling crafts, not initiated by the monarch, but by the arrogant Marquis de Prié, who wanted to set an example.

In Great Britain, the Elector of Hanover, under the name George I of England, succeeded Queen Anne. So, without war, the British Royal Family now falls into German hands…

And from Köthen, the birthplace of John's grandfather, comes musical news. At the age of 31, Johann Sebastian Bach has been appointed Kapellmeister at the court of the music-loving Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen. His salary is as high as that of the *Hofmarschall*, the second-highest official at court. John is certainly pleased that those who make music are so valued. Perhaps scholars will also be given a chance at the academies,

and, who knows, perhaps village teachers will one day be better paid. But first, they will have to master the art of teaching, and that could take some time.

From the friends of the *Ghent Medical College* John and Marianne hear hopeful news for the large number of smallpox victims. The wife of the British ambassador in Constantinople, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, learns there that dried smallpox scabs have long been inserted into children's noses in China. While they do become slightly ill, they are then unable to contract the disease. Lady Montagu, who herself survived smallpox but became blind in one eye, successfully applied the technique, which became known as *variolation* to her son. This, in turn, led to trials being conducted in England on death row inmates. A comparison shows that while three out of ten people die from the disease among unprotected individuals, only three out of a hundred die among protected individuals.

Ostend

The Lesmeister-Grünen family continued to live in Ghent until 1723. During that time, Dieudonné, now 16, gained a sister and a brother, now 12 and 10 years old, respectively.

It's summer when the family moves into a spacious house on Kaaistraat in Oostende. After the first busy days of getting the house in order, the family goes on an afternoon outing. It's sunny, and they walk toward the harbour. A ship is just arriving, carrying goods from the East Indies. For some families, the ship's return is not a celebration. Amidst tears and lamentations, mothers, wives, and children learn of the fate of two men who

perished overboard while rounding the Cape of Storms. Before the rest of the crew joins their families, everyone goes in silence to the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto. The ship's chaplain, along with one of the priests from the Capuchin Church, celebrates a Mass of thanksgiving for the safe return of the ship and the vast majority of its crew, who were spared from piracy and shipwreck. Prayers are also said for the souls of the two men who perished at sea. Some crew members are showing severe skin and mouth bleeding due to scurvy. However, according to the barber-surgeon present, they will recover quickly now that they can fully back *xitomatl* and potatoes.

After the thanksgiving Mass, no one is in a hurry to return home. Stories are told. From the helmsman, John hears that on the outward journey they had encountered a Dutch ship. From that crew, they learned that more than a year ago, on Easter Sunday, another Dutch ship, captained by Jacob Roggeveen, docked at an island in the *Pacific Sea* where, to their knowledge, no Dutch, British, or French had yet landed. The place, which became known as Easter Island, appears to have been inhabited by people who kindly welcomed the ship's crew.

John and Marianne are happy with their decision to move to the coast. They hope for frequent encounters with sailors who can tell them stories about their travels and encounters with other cultures. For Dieudonné, the move doesn't make much difference. Barely settled in Oostende, he goes, as had already been decided, to Utrecht for a while, and then to Leuven, where he will primarily study philosophy. His brother begins Latin

school at the Oratorian college. For his sister, this rather small city of Catholic origin is a perfect place to live. In *Belgium Austriacum* for the time being for girls only homeschooling is possible in Oostende.

John had already been following discussions in Ghent for some time about the reconstruction of Oostende and older plans for a local company focused on trade with the Indies. Between 1718 and 1722, traders from Antwerp, Ghent, and Oostende established the *Oostendse East India Sailors*. Besides the Indies, they also sailed to Mocha. But they had begun even earlier. Immediately after the War of the Spanish Succession and the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht, which placed the Southern Netherlands under the authority of the Austrian dynasty, private shipping companies were already sailing to Asia with the *Prince Eugene*, the *Marquis of Prié* and the *Saint-Mathieu.* The names of captains Gollet de la Merveille, De Winter, Bécu, and Filips Van Maastricht are not unknown in those maritime circles. In 1715, two ships sailed to the Indies, and in 1716, another to China. Furthermore, the manifesto of *The Grand Dauphin,* who enters Oostende in October 1717, with a large cargo of tea and silk, Chinese porcelain and small goods indicated as *chinoiserie*. It concerns lacquerware, mother-of-pearl shells, magical roots, and other articles of no great practical use. It is the last large ship to call at Oostende before the winter storms of 1717, although the port was not affected by the Christmas flood, which occurred mainly in the north of the *Mare Germanicum.* The situation was dire. In 1718, one ship sailed to Surat and another to Bengal. By 1719, seven ships were already sailing to India, and it was

anticipated that traffic would continue to increase.

In 1723 it finally happened that anyone in *Belgium Austriacum* can buy shares from the *General Imperial Indian Company*. The capital of 6 million guilders was subscribed in a very short time, almost exclusively by residents of the Austrian Netherlands. Two-thirds of them were from Antwerp. John subscribed to two indivisible shares of 1,000 guilders each. It was a fairly substantial investment. The price of these two shares was roughly equivalent to ten years' wages of a *Belgium Fœderatum* village teacher. In a short time, the shares will yield interest of 15 guilders per hundred. Foreign participation in the capital is small because the authorities of Great Britain, France, Holland, and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen prohibited investment or service in the *General Imperial Indian Company,* in short *Oostendse Compagnie*. Even in academic circles, there's a debate about the right to free movement in connection with the Company. John hears from Dieudonné about an incident at the Utrecht law school involving student Nicolas Hupka from Frankfurt-am-Main. Dieudonné writes to his father: *'After Nicolas's third questioning and before the chairman could proceed to the vote, an objection was raised by the supervisor, the Right Honourable Otto. According to him, one of the amendments the candidate had added to his dissertation was inappropriate because it did not seem to fit the prevailing political situation. The content of this amendment was that, under international law, it will always be permissible and lawful for all peoples, and therefore also the peoples of Belgium Austriacum, to conclude a maritime agreement for the purpose of trade with the distant Indies. The committee, which was asked for its opinion by*

the chairman, now believed that this matter pits the Belgians of the United Provinces against the Belgians of the Austrian territory in very fierce disputes and finds this amendment inopportune and intolerable, because they might believe that we are arrogating to ourselves the right to render a judicial decision in this dispute. Therefore, we believe that the candidate should not be awarded the doctorate if the amendment is not omitted when reprinting the two pages containing the amendments, and if the candidate does not promise to ensure that this is done.
Nicolas declared himself willing to do so and was promoted to Juris utriusque doctor.'.

Meanwhile, Emperor Charles VI was working on what would become known as the Pragmatic Sanction. He wanted to ensure his daughter would succeed him, thus ensuring that the Habsburg patrimony would remain undivided. The ultimate acceptance of this succession by the other European Grand Dukes would officially end the Oostendse Compagnie. Its success had already been a thorn in the side of the English monarch and the States General immediately after its founding. John found the following text in the archives about the entire controversy: '*Wishing to support the East and West Indian companies with all their might, the States-General issued a proclamation on June 24, 1723, prohibiting all their subjects from participating directly or indirectly in Ostend trade and from accepting service on the ships of these companies. All recruitment for the aforementioned company was prohibited, punishable by death and perpetual exile.*

They were not allowed to charter, purchase, or equip ships for themselves; nor to have any investment or share in this company, on penalty of four times the value of the investment; nor were brokers allowed to interfere with the trade of shares, on penalty of a fine of 1,000 guilders.

The French and English governments supported the demands of the United Provinces. In October 1723, at the request of Mr. Hope, the King of France issued a similar prohibition to his subjects. And to demonstrate that the king took this matter seriously, in 1724 he ordered the magistrate of Dunkirk to bring to trial Balthazar Ronse, Cajaphas, and Carpentier, three of the king's subjects and residents of that city, who, in the service of the Ostend Company, had each departed for the East Indies on a ship. In England, the House of Commons also passed a similar resolution, strictly forbidding, under penalty of forfeiture of property and other severe penalties, except death, anyone to participate in these registrations of the Ostend Company.

Despite all these difficulties and opposition, trade in Ostend continued to grow, and the Flemish and Brabant traders tirelessly pressed the court of Vienna to grant the emperor the right to establish a trading company. Their request was so strongly supported by Prince Engenius of Savoy and Margrave De Prié that the emperor signed the open letters of octroi in Vienna on December 19, 1722; however, they were only sent to Brussels in June of the following year and only then implemented..".

And now the Emperor, out of self-interest, accepts the dissolution of the Company in return for the Pragmatic Sanction that keeps the succession within his own family.

Shortly before the arrival of John and his family, Oostende had just over 6,800 inhabitants.
One finds more inns than schools in the city. Close to the skipper's house are *The Admiral of Flanders*, *t'Coninginneken* and the *Golden Lion*. Directly opposite the skipper's house, in the Sint Franciscusstraat you also have *Hostel Den Enge*l, where the crew of the East India sailors was recruited for the *Keyserinne* with Captain Jan Willemsen, for a trip to Mokka. From the Weststraat to the Westpoort you have *The Golden Eagle*, the *Golden Hands* and the*Golden Head* .More gold can be found near the hospital, where the *Golden Dragon* in *The Deer* lie. In the Langestraat you have *The Boathouse Meals* and the *Glowing Oven*. At the Kaaipoort lie The *Fontaine* and *the Golden Fleece*, in the Kaaistraat, *Croone's*. On the Oostmolenwal stands the *Three Fishes*, near the Kapucijnenstraat you have the *Green Shepherd*. The *Golden Apple* can be find at the new market square. That also home to Ostend's only nighttime illumination. Two oil lamps smoke next to the town hall.

But Oostende is the ideal workplace for John and Marianne. Between 1723 and 1730, they organize not only their own letters and notes, but also all the letters and notes from Wolfgang, Hildegarde, and Claudius. They also ask John's father to provide copies of anything he thinks might be useful for the *Opera Omnia* that they are preparing to educate children. Marianne has followed an old advice from Claudius to her mother-in-law and seeks out the Beguinage of Bruges. There she meets the young Begga de Bruges. The two women begin a lively correspondence. Meanwhile, John listens to sailors' stories

at the inns about what happens overseas. Both continue to exchange letters with their many contacts in Europe.

Marianne keeps track of everything. For example, in her Notebook IX, we find:
"Heard from Begga de Bruges.
Portugal:
From 1668 to 1720, 13 child teachers appeared before the tribunal of the Santo Ofício in Lisbon, Coimbra, and Évora, aged between 20 and 58. Only four were Old Christians, and only one of them had a father who was also a teacher. Most had secondary occupations.
France
In 1619, the Jesuits managed 36 schools, increasing to 93 by 1640. Today, the entire kingdom of France is more or less provided for. On the other hand, there are only 14 Protestant colleges, all in the Reformed Crescent. With a third of France's colleges and 40,000 students, the Jesuits are ahead of the Oratorians and Doctrinaires, who nevertheless enjoy some success.
The Brothers of the Christian Schools opened 22 schools in France between 1678 and 1719, primarily in the north of the empire. In the last century, almost all Catholic congregations attempted to enter into contracts with cities to establish or take over colleges.
Spain
In Madrid, the Estudio, where Cervantes studied, became the Imperial College of the Jesuits a hundred years ago. At that time, the order already had 110 institutions, mainly in Castile.

Dear Father,
Marianne and I are busy preparing our Opus Omnia*, in which we share our insights on parenting and education. We anticipate another two to three years of work ahead of us. However, we have already decided to dedicate the work to you and your mother, not to some local dignitary. We have contacts with printers in Amsterdam and Leipzig, but we will, of course, also consult our family in Frankfurt. We believe our writings will need to be published where the Catholic Church, with its* Index Librorum Prohibitorum *has no influence.*
Last month we analysed the complete Conduct of Christian Schools by *La Salle. It's an illuminating document. The schools in question impose an intellectual straitjacket on children and young people, which is inevitable. As for the teaching itself, it's as if Erasmus and Comenius never existed. And that's hardly surprising. Furthermore, there's no reference to any visual learning, not even to Vives. We find only strict instructional rules. These begin with the imposition of as much non-verbal communication as possible. Words are used solely for the purpose of teaching.*
'The first master or Inspector of schools will take care to appoint a very wise student to notice those who make noise while they are assembling, and this student will then only notice without speaking, and will then tell the master what has happened without the others being able to notice it..'
Incidentally, there's a chapter with 41 rules on the signals to be used, so that the teacher can avoid having to speak. Even punishment is preferably not verbal:
'Correction by word: As one of the principal rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is to speak rarely in their Christian school, the use of correction by word must be very rare there; it even seems that it is much better not to use it at all.'.

School hours are very precisely defined and are introduced by signal. There are specific rituals for each moment, such as at the start of the day: Schools will always begin at exactly eight o'clock in the morning, and at half-past one in the afternoon. At the last stroke of eight o'clock and at the last bell of half-past one, a schoolboy will ring the school bell, and at the first stroke of the bell, all the schoolboys will kneel, arms crossed, in a very modest posture and appearance.'

Nothing is left to chance, not even the variations in the amount of bread collected for the poor:

'If there is more or less bread in the basket than those who are poor can reasonably eat, the master will inquire of the Brother Director what he should do on these occasions.'

There are nine types of lessons, each subject to very strict rules. The lessons are named as follows:

'1st Lesson: The Alphabet Card; 2nd The syllable map; 3rd The syllabary; 4th The first book; 5th The second book in which those who can spell perfectly begin to read; 6th The third book that serves to learn to read in pauses; 7th The Psalter; 8th Civility; 9th Handwritten letters.'

The teachers are not allowed to change anything in the lessons.

'The teachers will never change any lesson or order of lesson for any student in their class; they will only present to the Inspector those whom they believe to be in a position to be changed..'

'The teacher will take particular care not to become familiar with the pupils, not to speak to them in a weak manner and not to allow the pupils to speak to him except with great respect…'

Therefore, the teachers do not decide when a child changes lessons. They submit them to the inspector or First Teacher, who makes the decision. Deviations from the standard rule, when a child shows difficulty, are also included in strict general rules:

'When someone has difficulty remembering a letter, he will have to repeat it several times in a row, and he will not change the line until he knows this letter perfectly as well as all the others..'
Reading begins with memorising the names of the letters, and there are five precise rules for this, including pronouncing the letters correctly and avoiding dialectal inflections. Until the fifth lesson, children are not allowed to read, but only to memorize.
'In the syllabary, the schoolchildren will only spell the syllables and will not read; it will be necessary to make them aware first of these difficulties which are encountered in the pronunciation of syllables, and which are o great quantity in French; for this it will be necessary for each teacher to know perfectly the treatise on pronunciation.'
Since students are not allowed to read before they begin the second book in the fifth lesson, prayers must also be memorised.
'The pupils who learn the letters or syllables from the cards or from the syllabary, and who spell and read from the second book, will repeat the prayers during lunch and snack time, not only on the first two days of the week, but also on the two days on which the catechism is to be repeated..'
No writing occurs before the age of 10.
'We will ensure that schoolchildren do not learn to write until they reach the age of ten..'
There are two additional requirements for learning to write. First, children must bring the paper they will use for their writing exercises, and second, they must first be able to read French and Latin.
'When schoolchildren can read perfectly, both in French and in Latin, they will be taught to write, and as soon as they begin to write, they will be taught to read in the book of Civility.'
Rewards are strictly regulated and primarily related to good or

Christian behaviour. Rewards consist of three levels, with the highest starting level consisting of:

'- books

- *vellum images, plaster figures, such as virgins, agnus and other small handmade works,*
- *paper images and sentences in large print.'*

The Conduites contains no fewer than 188 rules on penalties and criminal procedures. The first rule describes the penalties available:

'By word, by penance, by rod, by scourging, by the whip, by driving out of school'

I've mentioned the spoken word before. It's the least used form of punishment, as speaking is generally avoided. However, there are fifteen rules regarding the use of the palm stick and more than thirty regarding punishment with a stick or whip, such as:

'The martinet is a stick eight to nine inches long, at the end of which there should be four or five ropes; at the end of each of which there should be three knots. It should be made in this shape. It will be used to whip schoolchildren.'

It's only when one gets to the Livre de la Civilité that numeracy and selected literature and history are taught. By that point, children are already at least 10 years old, since the Civilité is only tackled when they begin writing. And here lies not a snake in the grass, but a large anaconda in the grass: this means that most working-class children will never get around to writing or numeracy. At that age, they are often taken on as apprentices in a trade or begin work as a servant. They don't even get around to the chosen literature, let alone any acquisition of knowledge or scholarship. The brothers of the Christian Schools*, compiled with the* Conduites *written by Jean-Baptiste La Salle, may keep the poor children from bad*

adventures, but until the age of ten they teach little more than the memorisation of letters and prayers, perhaps supplemented by the reading of edifying sayings and fragments of text. And they are rigorously instructed regarding punishment and reward. It's claimed that one of the innovations of Christian schools is that children now learn to read in their own language. That's not true. Both the Petite École of Port-Royal and the schools Ratke and Comenius attend already implemented this. Grandfather Wolfgang discussed this at length. We're looking for further information about the introduction of class-based lessons instead of individual instruction.

Dear Father, you see that, while we seek with an open mind for models for training teachers and instructors, we cannot avoid noticing how the Counter-Reformation proposes models that enslave rather than liberate people, even though theologians often argue the opposite when they speak of initiation to God and religion. I don't know whether this means that too few theologians concern themselves with didactics and mathematics, or that people are only interested in the metaphysical liberation of the soul.

More news from Belgium Austriacum to conclude. It seems the cities are gradually regaining some financial equilibrium. Our friends in Ghent tell us that the costs to the city associated with the occupations by the Alliance and the French were estimated at approximately 117,000 to 233,000 guilders. After much haggling, the French government managed to settle on a sum of slightly less than 50,000 guilders. This is paid in instalments until 1725. Still, my friends say, this repays about half of the losses incurred. Of course, this doesn't compensate for the personal sacrifices of the

population who suffered under successive occupations. Here in Oostende, the situation is different. As you know, the city was largely rebuilt after the destruction of 1706. Thanks to the Oostendse Compagnie, there is currently no shortage of trade and port activity. Yet it remains a small city, even for our children. Dieudonné recently returned from Leuven but leaves for Paris next week. Johannes is in Leuven at the moment and Maria spends more time in Bruges, with Begga, than at our home.
Your affectionate son and daughter-in-law, John and Marianne

Dear son,

It's clear that Comenius' dream is still far from being realised. Not everyone has access to all that is known. And many who appropriate power, of any kind, contribute to perpetuating this inequality.
Perhaps you'll be interested in what I'm hearing from Russia. There, they developed the Tchin or Table of Ranks which determines the degree of nobility by means of the assigned hierarchical functions. There are 14 grades, the eight highest of which constitute the hereditary nobility. Peter the Great did make some concessions to local nobles, who now manage local government. In return, he receives guarantees of seven years of military service, ten years of civilian service, or fifteen years of service in trade and industry. Meanwhile, schools are also appearing, but serfdom exists everywhere and is worsening. Smallholdings are disappearing as large estates benefit the property and power of a minority.
From Britain I heard that the Aciento *isn't as loss-making as the administrators of the then-disastrous South Sea Company made it out to be. The slave traders shipped plenty of people as*

merchandise, not only to Spanish but also to British possessions in what was hypocritically called the New World.

And a short family announcement to conclude. Martin has acquired a pianoforte. The sound of the instrument is much more pleasant to my aging ears than the harpsichord. I'm very happy to hear two of Martin's children playing regularly. They are focusing primarily on a book of preludes and fugues in all 24 keys. The book was published by Johann Sebastian Bach in 1722 in our old Köthen. I was told that Bach wrote this book primarily to provide keyboard instruction. Here in Martin's house, it's certainly a success.

Your affectionate father,

Pieter

END OF BOOK 02

A strange letter

Dear Pascal

We are taking advantage of small glitches in the space-time continuum to allow you to become a saga of educators, pedagogues, and anthropogogues. The saga was first published in 122.15 (Holocene calendar), which corresponds to the year 2215 according to the calendar you use in the 21st century.

The dynasty spans 20 generations, from 1630 to 2222 in your era.
When we studied your century in preparation for the work, we found your name and your interest in dialogical learning. That is why we kindly ask you to further disseminate the documents we send whenever we get the chance.

You can rest assured. The glitch in the continuum will have no impact on the past or future of living people. Only documents can be sent through it.

On behalf of the team of writers,

Maria Liber

Babitha Chakma is a historian. She has chosen the relationship between oppressor and oppressed as her field of study. Babitha has also studied the influence of the arrogance of the 117th and 118th hectoyear rulers of Zone 2 West on the suffering of the local population and the population from the colonised zones.

Delun Huang is interested in the history of the printed word and dialogue-based interaction. He currently collects information on Claudia Cardinalis and other critics regarding power in matters of faith.

In this second book of the Magister-Auctor saga, we encounter the first three generations of the dynasty of anthropogogues. We follow the conversations of Wolfgang, Pieter, and John, along with their family and friends, against the backdrop of religious wars, increasing slavery and serfdom, and the evolution of the Northern and Southern Netherlands. We also trace the development of the school's establishment from 1630 AD to 1730 AD. For humanists and intellectuals, it was the place to make scholarship common property; for those in power, it was a means to facilitate the enslavement of the common people.